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Author:

Haider, Carmen

Title:

Capital and labor under
fascism

Place:

New York

Date:

1930

94-82630-2
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Haider, Carmen, 1906-

Capital and labor under fascism, by Carmen Haider, PH. D.
New York, Columbia university press; London, P. S. King
& son, ltd., 1930.

296 p. diagrs. 23^{cm}. (Half-title: Studies in history, economics and
public law, ed. by the Faculty of political science of Columbia uni-
versity, no. 318)

Issued also as thesis (PH. D.) Columbia university.
Bibliography: p. 286-289.

1. Industry and state—Italy. 2. Trade-unions—Italy. 3. Syndical-
ism—Italy. 4. Fascism—Italy. 5. Labor and laboring classes—Italy.
I. Title.

Library of Congress
——— Copy 2.
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H31.C7 no. 318
HD6709.H3 1930 a
{34v2}

30-9010

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Number 318

CAPITAL AND LABOR UNDER FASCISM

PLEASE RETURN TO
CARL SHOUP
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NEW YORK CITY

CAPITAL AND LABOR UNDER FASCISM

BY
CARMEN HAIDER, Ph.D.



NEW YORK
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON; P. S. KING & SON, LTD.
1930

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sed intelligere.

SPINOZA.

PREFACE

THE term "fascism" is more and more frequently used to denote a political movement, which came originally as a reaction from the chaos which in almost all the belligerent countries followed the World War. Of these various movements that of Italy is said to be the most typical as it certainly has become the most fully developed. Although the motives or the exterior forms of the post-war movements in the different countries may resemble one another, I believe it incorrect to consider them as completely equivalent since they are differentiated by special characteristics, which result from the particular national mentalities and situations. Therefore it has seemed to me that the Italian syndicate experiment should be studied by itself as an outcome of the Italian conditions. Accordingly I have devoted attention to syndicalism outside of Italy only when it has had an influence on the Italian situation. Also, I have attempted in this study to interpret fascism from the Italian point of view, being guided by considerations coming from within the national life, and not by objections which persons of other intellectual backgrounds make to the system.

Likewise I have considered it necessary, in order really to understand the phenomenon, to approach it without any prejudice based upon a personal political conviction. Desiring to interpret the Italian fascist movement in its own frame, to sense its spirit and to understand the fascination Mussolini has exercised over large masses of the Italian population, I have approached the problem not as a sceptical observer, but in a sympathetic attitude. This has been all the more easy to me, as my great sympathy for the Italian people has led

me really to take the questions to heart. Nevertheless I have tried not to be blinded by sentiment but to keep an open mind.

The study, presented in the following pages, is the result of a theoretical examination of the documents and of the publications on fascism, of observations on the spot and of actual contact with the leading personalities of the fascist and the anti-fascist movements. Although I have reached my own conclusions on the subject, I have tried to remain impartial, to show the problem in its complexity and interconnections and to let the facts speak for themselves. As a result, detailed description of the syndicate structure and definite statements at times convey the impression that the plan is in full operation, while at other points in the discussion only a vague impression can be gained as to the actual working of the system. This is due to the fact that the laws are quite specific and often regulate even minor details, while in actual practice it again and again has been deemed advisable to suspend these provisions and to experiment. This makes it extremely difficult to be certain at a given period what provisions of a law are in actual operation.

For an adequate investigation I thought it necessary to approach the problem from the two sides, that of capital and that of labor, and to explain the attitude of the different groups by quoting their own arguments. As a result, I hope that the reader himself may gain an impression of the various forces which react upon one another, so that he may have the sensation of observing the phenomenon personally. This seems to me the prerequisite of an impartial study.

To present the problem in its proper light, I have written a short introduction, sketching the Italian situation in the immediate post-war years as it appeared to the average Italian citizen, little interested in political movements, and little informed on the forces that worked under the surface. Of

course, I recognize that that period would merit a more exhaustive study, if it were to be rendered in its entire complexity, but such an undertaking would have surpassed the limits of my study.

On the other hand, I believed that to do justice to fascism it was necessary to explain its theoretical conceptions. Not only does fascism declare that it cannot discuss its policies with liberal or socialist elements because they view the problem from a different angle, but there are certain characteristics of fascism which decidedly distinguish it from all other political conceptions, and which are of practical importance in Italy today. This, of course, does not prevent my recognizing that the fascist theory is not a preconceived doctrine, but rather an outcome of a state of facts, the intellectual explanation and sometimes justification of certain actions.

Following a purely scientific examination of the inner consistency of the conception, I have given special attention to the actual application of the syndicate system. I have thought it necessary, for a complete survey, to include the fascist parliamentary reform and to describe the situation in which the non-fascist elements find themselves. In the course of the examination I have taken occasion to illustrate the achievements of fascism, but also to show the difficulties which stand in the way of its complete application, and the unfavorable effects which the system has brought about. That these unfavorable results are not lacking is also recognized by the fascists, but they put their trust in forces which may in time succeed in overcoming them. Again, I have called attention to the various undercurrents which may shape the future policies of fascism, and I have tried to forecast the possibilities of the future, and the factors which will probably have the most decisive influence on the ultimate success or failure of the entire movement. In this examination and interpretation some persons will perhaps find that I could

have omitted the one or the other point which sheds a favorable or unfavorable light on the situation, but I would have regarded such action as insincere, and as seriously diminishing the value of a critical study, in which an attitude of absolute honesty and impartiality is the foremost duty.

Fascism, like any other human phenomenon, is not a perfect or completely harmonious movement, as some writers who exalt the Italian Government would like to make us believe, but neither is everything completely to be rejected, as some violent and bitter opponents of the regime proclaim. Still, both points of view are understandable and indeed—paradoxical as this may seem—are the outcome of the same situation, are based on the same facts. It has been my endeavor in this work to describe the Italian situation in such a way that the reader will realize that the two convictions naturally flow out of the given conditions, and may see the interconnection between the opposing points of view, and judge according to his own intelligence. If this study should succeed in serving as such a connecting link, and of illustrating the phenomenon of fascism and of "integral syndicalism" in Italy to the foreign reader so that some of the problems of the Italian people may be more justly evaluated and understood abroad, I shall have fulfilled my task.

Success in my undertaking will not be to my credit alone, for at every step I have been assisted in the most obliging way by all Italians that I have had occasion to approach, whether they were representative persons or simple laborers. Nor should there be made any distinction between fascists and anti-fascists in this case. Extreme courtesy and the readiness to help are above all Italian characteristics, which no political struggle can efface. If in this preface, I abstain from expressing my gratitude personally to each one of the opponents of the fascist regime whom I have met in Italy, this is not because I am less obliged and less thankful to them.

Among the fascists who received me, I cannot but express my thanks above all to the leader of the movement, the head of the Italian Government, his Exc. Benito Mussolini, who very kindly discussed some points with me. This privilege was rendered possible to me by his Exc. Giuseppe Bottai, Undersecretary of State at the Corporation-Ministry, who also gave me all the information I desired, and furnished some recent statistical data.

Upon the introduction of Professor Corrado Gini, president of the Central Institute of Statistics, I met his Exc. Bottai and other eminent representatives of the fascist regime, such as his Exc. Augusto Turati, Secretary General of the fascist party, his Exc. Alfredo Rocco, and his Exc. Edmondo Rossoni. Professor Gini also tried to assist me in every other possible way, and it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to express my sincere and cordial gratitude to him.

His Ex. Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice, is well known abroad for his interpretation of fascism, and it was indeed interesting to me to meet him. I was also fortunate in having the opportunity to discuss the general fascist policy with his Exc. Senator Giovanni Gentile, as well as the special work of the Commission of Eighteen of which he had been president.

The conversations which I had with his Exc. Edmondo Rossoni were of great interest to me, not only because his Exc. Rossoni is the founder of fascist syndicalism and so able to give me valuable material on various phases of the movement, but also because they took place at the time of the dissolution of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates. I also talked with the presidents of the new laborers' confederations, notably Hon. Igino Magrini, president of the Confederation of the Sea and Air Workers, who had an outline of the social and economic activities of his organiza-

tion especially prepared for me, and who also arranged for my visit to the Seamen's Home in Genoa. Hon. Luigi Razza, president of the Confederation of Agriculture, also discussed special aspects of the agricultural labor problem with me and put the entire collection of the fascist agricultural newspapers at my disposal.

I learned the point of view of the Confederation of Agriculturalists in particular from its director general, Comm. Marozzi. At the Confederation headquarters I also received special data, and introductions were given me to the various provincial federations. The special problem of the "battle of the grain" was described to me by Professor Mario Ferragutti, who is secretary general of the Committee for the Battle of the Grain.

At the headquarters of the Confederation of Industry I had the opportunity of meeting Hon. Gino Olivetti, and while there also discussed the problem from the employers' standpoint with Professor Giovanni Balella. In Milan, I saw the president of the Confederation of Industry, Hon. A. S. Benni, and Gr. Uff. Carlo Tarlarini, president of the Industrial Union in Milan, and in Genoa Gr. Uff. Bartolomeo Moresco, president of the Industrial Union of that province.

With regard to the attitude of the laborers' syndicates, I investigated also in the provincial districts. Signor Luigi Begnotti, who then was at the head of the provincial syndicate in Brescia, was especially kind to me, describing the work of the organization in minute detail. In addition to these points of view, I had occasion to discuss the fascist attempt at a solution of the capital-labor problem with industrialists and with laborers, of whom some were enrolled in the fascist syndicates, and others were opposed to the present Government.

Gr. Uff. Giacomo di Giacomo, president of the Confedera-

tion of Intellectuals, gave me some material on the syndicate movement of the professional class in Italy, and later I had an opportunity to discuss this extremely interesting problem with the head of the Italian Government, his Exc. Mussolini himself. Hon. G. Bruni in Milan also gave me his impression on the functioning of the system.

Professor Sergio Panunzio and Professor Carlo Costamagna, who are both students of the corporate state, likewise talked over with me the fascist attempt to harmonize the interests of capital and labor. Comm. Cacciola, central director of the *Dopolavoro*,¹ furnished me with all the material I desired, and whatever points still remained obscure to me were elucidated by his Exc. Augusto Turati, who, besides being Secretary General of the fascist party, is special commissioner of the *Dopolavoro*. About the work pursued by the Institute of Maternity and Infancy, I was informed by its director general, Comm. B. Graziani.

Whenever possible I have tried to view the problem of capital and labor in its wider frame of fascism and to interpret it in the light of related problems. I was grateful to his Exc. Alberto de Stefani, former Finance Minister of Italy, who at present directs the fascist policy of land reclamation. He discussed economic problems with me and described the attempts of the Government for land reclamation and ruralization. His Exc. Senator Count Giuseppe Volpi de Misurata, former Finance Minister, also talked to me about the financial situation, and especially about the questions relating to the revaluation of the lira.

I had an opportunity of seeing his Exc. Luigi Federzoni, then Colonial Minister; his Exc. Admiral Sirianni, Under-

¹ The *Dopolavoro* is an organization aiming to provide cultural and physical recreational facilities for the workers. For fuller account see Chapter VII. Since there is no word in English, which would adequately describe the *dopolavoro* movement, the Italian word will be used throughout the book.

secretary of State at the Naval Ministry; and the Marshal of Italy, his Exc. Pietro Badoglio, then head of the armed forces in Italy. I also talked to Senator Count Antonio Cippico and his sister, Signora Pezzoli, who was formerly at the head of the feminine fascist organization in Rome. Signora Pezzoli had the kindness to introduce me to the directress of the Edmondo de Amicis school in Rome, Signorina Ida Bouché Panicelli, whereby I was able to obtain a first-hand impression of the fascist educational reform, which I had already discussed with his Exc. Senator Giovanni Gentile, who had introduced it in Italy while Minister of Public Instruction.

On the activities pursued by the Azione Cattolica Italiana, I was informed by Rev. Father Giovanni Balduzzi, who is at the head of the assistance section (social welfare of workers) and by Doctor Ludovico Montoni.

Not less courteously and kindly than in Italy was I received by the anti-fascists in Paris, who tried in every way to assist me in my work. Hon. Filippo Turati and Hon. Claudio Treves, both eminent leaders of reformatory socialism in Italy, have several times discussed the general situation in Italy and particular aspects of it with me. I was shown exceptional courtesy by Hon. Bruno Buozzi, secretary of the Italian Confederation of Labor, and as he is a specialist on the subject and follows the fascist syndicate movement with great attention, my conversations with him were interesting and instructive, and the material that he put at my disposal was very useful to me.

Among the Italian socialist leaders, I also met his Exc. Arturo Labriola, former Minister of Labor, when he came from Brussels. Notwithstanding his short stay in France, he discussed the fascist phenomenon with me very thoroughly. Signor Alceste de Ambris, labor leader of the revolutionary syndicalists in Italy and the originator of the

Constitution of the Free State of Fiume in its conceptional aspect, has given me his opinion of the fascist syndicate movement.

His Exc. Francesco Nitti, former Prime Minister of Italy discussed the Italian situation with me, and the point of view of the Italian democrats was also elucidated for me by Doctor Alberto Cianca, former director of the newspaper *Il Mondo* in Rome. Doctor Giuseppe Donati, former member of the Italian Parliament, expressed the attitude of the exiled catholics; his Exc. Eugenio Chiesa, former Minister of Aeronautics and leader of the republicans, explained the stand of his party, and Hon. Francesco Buffoni has especially described for me the period of communistic agitations in Italy and the fascist reaction against them. Doctor Angelica Balabanoff, the Russian socialist who for years has been a member of the Italian socialist party, and as such was the collaborator of his Exc. Mussolini at the time when he was editor of the *Avanti*, informed me as to the Italian situation at the outbreak of the World War, the expulsion of Mussolini from the socialist party, and his subsequent foundation of the *Popolo d'Italia*.

To all these persons I wish to express my sincere and hearty thanks. Their collaboration has rendered my work interesting and the subject with which I dealt extremely vivid.

It would be unjust and indeed ungrateful to close this preface, which is an eloquent illustration of the rare kindness of all Italians I have met, without mentioning the way in which my professors at Columbia University in New York, especially Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman and Professor Henry R. Seager, have helped me throughout the years of this study, and I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere and lasting gratitude to them.

CARMEN HAIDER

PARIS, JUNE 15, 1929.

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CHAPTER I

THE LABOR PROBLEM AS A WORLD PROBLEM

THE labor problem is generally thought of as a world problem. The industrial revolution has touched more or less all countries of the western hemisphere, and hence the various reactions to it show certain similar characteristics. The drawing together of the workers in factories gave rise to the modern labor problem. When the worker realized that he as an individual was powerless in his dealings with the employer, the belief spread that the masses of the workers, united by a common will, would be a factor strong enough to counterbalance the alleged tyranny of the capitalists. Karl Marx in his manifesto of 1848, had propounded the idea that the solution of the labor problem was only to be found in a communistic society, to be prepared by a dictatorship of the proletariat. The power of the mass was declared proportional to the number of individuals composing it: the greater the number, the more potent the mass. Hence the tendency to create an organization embracing all workers within a given territory, within the nation, and finally within the world.

The employers themselves have in a sense forced the workers into this path, the goal of which is world union, by stressing the importance of international competition, which does not permit them to raise wages or to diminish working hours unless employers in other countries do the same. This objection can only be met by an international union of all workers, so that the demands of the laborers of one country will be backed by their brothers in other nations.

After the idea of the nation as an economic unity in competition with other nations was introduced, the conception of a world union of labor was changed to that of an international or political union. This step, although suggested, was not absolutely necessary, but it came at a time when political thought was permeated with internationalism. The French revolutionists were the first to advocate a world revolution to ensure the general acceptance and application of an idea that had been nationally conceived. From that time onward most movements tended towards internationalism, stressing the common factors in the human race and minimizing or unconsciously neglecting the differentiating characteristics between peoples. This general state of mind furnished the background for the theory of the international brotherhood of all workers.

Simultaneously with this development and as a result of the same underlying causes, comes the attempt to industrialize the East, whereby the labor problem is carried into the eastern countries as well. Hence the labor problem, if internationally conceived, presents itself in its entirety only when the huge masses of oriental workers acquire a common consciousness and unite with their western brethren. The fear that they may never do so, but that their different background, beliefs and reactions will lead them along a different path, has brought to the foreground one of the difficulties of internationalism. We are faced by a wide discrepancy between eastern and western mentalities, which will cause different answers to be given to the same problem. In this case the phenomenon does not require discussion, the difficulty being strikingly obvious. The same fact has been true of different countries and different races in the western world, but the importance of this hidden problem has been neglected or undervalued, or it has been refused acknowledgment.

Among all wage-earners the Italians possess the greatest international experience, not only because many of them periodically cross the frontiers to secure seasonal work in bordering countries, but chiefly because every year great numbers of them settle down abroad. As they were animated by a boundless, absolute faith in international solidarity and brotherhood among laborers, regardless of their nationality, it was all the more painful for them to learn that these ideals were frequently forgotten in the face of the bitter struggle for bread and the question of high or low wages. Furthermore, at times they have found themselves misunderstood, misjudged and even despised, especially in countries of non-latin mentality.

Although these doubts are said to have agitated the minds of many Italian workmen, the problem only crystalized after the outbreak of the World War. In Italy public opinion was divided on the question of whether the country was to enter the World War or not, and if so, on which side. To decide what attitude they were to take, the officials of the socialist party, who all belonged to the radical wing, arranged for a meeting in Milan, to which the representatives of the Confederation of Labor and the leaders of the syndicalists were also invited. Not only did the socialists decide against the war, thereby upholding their ideal of an international workmen's opposition to any war which they regarded as waged in the interest of capitalism, but when a syndicalist suggested that their attitude might change in case Italy fought on the side of the Allies, the suggestion was explicitly rejected.

The decision of the leaders was confirmed at a general meeting in Rome, and henceforth the socialists, together with other elements of the population which also favored neutrality, waged a strong campaign against Italy's entry into the war, making special use of their newspaper *Avanti*, the editor of which was Benito Mussolini.

While the socialist party thus presented a united front, an article was published in an important agrarian newspaper, stating that, although the socialists seemed to be in favor of absolute neutrality, yet "a very influential socialist leader" had written to a friend of his that they "would adopt an entirely different attitude, if there were question of war on the side of the Allies against the Central Powers."¹ Immediately a meeting was called by the officials of the socialist party, at which it was soon determined that the dissenting opinion had been expressed by Mussolini, as the *Avanti* of that morning had published an article entitled "Armed Neutrality", in which Mussolini had expressed his new point of view. As a result the editorship of the *Avanti* was taken away from him, whereupon Mussolini announced the foundation of a new paper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, an act which in turn led to his expulsion from the socialist party at a general meeting. As the editor of the *Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini soon became the leader of the interventionist movement, strongly supported by Edmondo Rossoni, an eminent member of the syndicalist group, and by Filippo Corridóni. These all maintained that the opposition of large masses of the population to the war caused the Government to pursue a vacillating policy, and that this uncertain state of mind disgraced Italy not only among the Central Powers but even in the eyes of the Entente, and, at the same time, undermined public respect for the Administration within the country.

The conviction grew that the attitude of the workers in the belligerent countries had proved that the bonds uniting the members of any one nation whether laborers, capitalists or intellectuals, were infinitely stronger in the face of danger than the abstract conception of an international union of all workers, and that everywhere national interests were super-

¹ Article by Libero Tancredi in *Il Resto del Carlino*.

seding class differences; an opposition to the international conception of the labor problem arose, which continued after the end of the World War. A more immediate and more tangible solution was sought. Fascism, although recognizing the labor problem as world-wide and of international bearing and importance, nevertheless advocates a national solution. Conscious of the interplay and the interrelation of all factors, the fascists have presented a program of government in which the different problems are so intimately interwoven, that an interpretation of the fascist plan for solution of the labor question can only be attempted in the light of their conception of the state. The background, into which the problem is to be fitted, must first be sketched.

CHAPTER II

EVENTS LEADING TO THE BIRTH OF FASCISM

THE end of the war brought great disappointment to Italy. It was generally believed throughout the country that she had not been fairly treated by her Allies, having received neither what had been promised to her by the secret treaties of 1915 and 1916, nor what she regarded as a share proportional to the hardships she had endured.

Not only was the morale of the country lowered, and a feeling of humiliation, indignation and disillusionment widespread, but the economic situation, as in most other countries, was desperate. Large external and internal debts had been incurred. The low credit of Italy was reflected in the steady inflation of the lira, to stop which, and in order to pay interest on the debts, Italy floated large foreign loans which, although affording momentary relief, only aggravated the problem in the long run. The budget was unbalanced; the deficit amounted to 23,423 million lire in 1919, to 12,369 millions in 1920, increasing again to 18,205 millions in 1921, and dropping to 17,157 million lire in 1922.¹ While the high figure for 1919 was largely due to the readjustment of industry to peace conditions, the continuous high deficit from 1920 to 1922 must be accounted for by other factors. It should, however, be remembered that the figures for the different years are not strictly comparable, as the value of the Italian currency continually decreased. In spite of the much advocated policy of producing more and consuming less, the average monthly excess of imports over exports still amounted to 631 millions in 1921

¹ Official figures of the *Ragioneria Generale dello Stato*.

and to 539 million lire in 1922.¹ Despite the high taxes on capital the total tax receipts were insufficient, the reason being that, while a few were paying excessively, many escaped taxation altogether. Because of the high inheritance tax, thrift among the population and investment in Italian enterprises were discouraged.

Another difficulty was the degeneration of the bureaucratic system. Thousands of state employees, for whom there was really no work, were kept on the payroll because no Government dared to dismiss them in face of the fact that any increase in the number of unemployed would be violently protested by the workers. Confusion, desperation and almost anarchy are said to have reigned throughout the country. The railroads, after burdening the Government budget for years with their heavy deficits, stopped running at times. The communists, pointing to Russia, maintained that the existing crisis marked the downfall of private capitalism, and thereby kept the masses in a state of nervous excitement.

At this period most organized workers belonged to the socialist labor unions, which under the pressure of the masses pursued a rather radical policy. Even many non-socialists supported that party, partly because, disappointed at peace without victory—a gesture of generosity which it was thought that so hardpressed a country as Italy could not indulge in—they remembered that the socialists had always disapproved of the war. The masses, fascinated by the Russian experiment, entered into frequent and prolonged strikes, often against the will of their leaders.

In 1920 the total number of industrial strikes amounted to 1,881; 1,267,953 workers were engaged in them, with a loss of 16,398,227 workdays. In agriculture there were 189 strikes in the same year, being supported by 1,045,732

¹ *Bulletin de Statistique* of the League of Nations.

workers with a loss of 14,170,991 days. In 1921 the figures for industry show 1,045 strikes with 664,564 supporters and 7,702,670 days lost; and in 1922, 552 strikes with 422,773 strikers and 6,586,235 lost workdays. In agriculture there were 89 strikes in 1921, supported by 79,298 laborers, who lost 407,393 days, and in 1922, 23 strikes in which 25,146 workers were engaged and 330,679 days lost. When the Government invited the agricultural laborers to appropriate and cultivate the unoccupied lands, the workers arbitrarily extended this permission to the uncultivated lands. Although as a rule the uncultivated areas coincided with those unoccupied, the few cases in which agriculturalists were menaced sufficed to make the bourgeois class fear that a bolshevist expropriation had begun.

During the immediate post-war period the socialist party is said to have had an opportunity of seizing the reigns of the Government several times, especially since they had a very strong majority in Parliament. It is generally believed that their last chance presented itself in 1920 at the moment of the occupation of the factories. As early as 1919, several local occupations of factories had occurred, the most important of which was the one in the metal establishment in Dalmine in the province of Bergamo. It was directed by the *Unione Italiana del Lavoro*, an organization with fascist tendencies. At that time Mussolini and his paper, the *Popolo d'Italia*, enthusiastically supported the movement.

In 1920, the industrialists openly declared that they did not believe it necessary to adjust wages to the cost of living, and, following the refusal of the workers to accept their conditions, they threatened a lockout. In agreement with the socialist party, the representatives of the Confederation of Labor, fearing the moral effects of a general strike on the already excited working masses but wishing to avoid a lock-

out, ordered their adherents to go to the factories as usual, but not to work. This occupation of the factories added to the fear on the part of the bourgeoisie, all the more as the Government did not send soldiers against the laborers and refused to fire upon them, since the factories would have been destroyed as well. The employers requested the Confederation to draw up a collective contract which they would sign unconditionally, but the representatives of the workmen refused, partly because they feared that the capitalists would later accuse them of coercion, but chiefly because they hoped to induce the leaders of the socialist party to profit by the occasion and seize power. In fact it was widely believed in Italy that the agitation would develop into a revolution and that the socialists would take over the Government. Benito Mussolini also must have considered a similar outcome possible, for he arranged during the very first days of the struggle for an interview with the socialist labor representative, Bruno Buozzi. On that occasion Mussolini pointed out that up to that moment whatever opinion the *Popolo d'Italia* had expressed on the situation had been favorable to the workers, and that in the future he would closely follow the movement himself and write the comments. He finally asked whether the socialists had considered the possible political outcome of the situation. When Bruno Buozzi answered in the affirmative, but gave no further information—as they did not belong to the same party—Mussolini declared that he would rather see the factories in the hands of the workmen than in the possession of the capitalists, but that the fascists would have to oppose any communistic experiment. Should the socialists, however, adopt a sound and serious policy, and give to Italy the much longed for internal peace, he added, they would have the support of the fascists.

But the importance and danger of the occupation of the

factories had been greatly over-estimated. The political leaders of socialism realized that it would be impossible for the wage-earners to run the factories, as they possessed neither the businessman's ability nor the training of the technician. Moreover, the leaders did not believe the movement strong enough to cause an overthrow of the Government. As the agitation died down they ordered the labor representatives to draw up and sign a collective contract. However, although the movement did not bring the socialists to power, the bourgeois were frightened by it, for, though the occupation of the factories was not intended to and did not in fact result in dispossessing them, theoretically it had struck at their property rights. Others opposed the socialists because they declared that the latter had neither sufficient strength to take over the Government, nor the desire to collaborate with any other Government, and that their majority in Parliament consequently only provoked constant crises. For these reasons all reactionary elements were strengthened.

Among the movements that profited by this state of affairs were the war-veterans' organizations. Ex-soldiers, having offered their lives in the service of their country, resented the scorn with which they were frequently treated by the disillusioned population, and the admitted inability or unwillingness of the Government to protect them against attacks. On March 23, 1919, during the period of socialist supremacy, Benito Mussolini organized an association of ex-soldiers, proclaiming that they had fulfilled a noble duty, for which they merited reward.

In November, 1921, Mussolini's ex-soldier organization, together with persons from the nationalist and the syndicalist field, founded the fascist party, which opposed the idea that Italy should adopt the solution arrived at in Russia, and declared that the Italian people, by an energetic attack, would be able to cope with the difficulties if only law and order were re-

established, so as to ensure steady production. Although originally few in number, their discipline and organization rendered them strong and enabled them to confront the bolsheviks in the battles that frequently occurred in the streets, especially on the so-called "bloody Sundays". We must not be astonished, therefore, that about 1,500 fascists had lost their lives before fascism ever came to power.

As the war psychology gradually disappeared, many of the workers, tired of the continuous excitement, disappointed by the ineffective occupation of the factories, and perhaps also believing that the frequent strikes only damaged them, deserted the socialist labor unions. On the other hand, during 1921, fascism found support among the agricultural population of the valley of the Po, and it was only then—in the words of Mussolini—that "fascism, having become a phenomenon of the masses, of the rural masses, saw the problem of syndicalism burst forth in its entire vastness, with all its technical and human problems."¹

Although adherence to fascism was widespread throughout the country, especially among the younger generation, politicians and intellectuals paid little attention to the movement, because it had only been expressed in the field of physical action. Although there had been some fascist delegates in Parliament, the possibility of their forming a Government had not been considered, and when the fascists came to power through the "March on Rome" on October 28, 1922, there were many questions as to their program. Mussolini declared that it was "not programs of salvation Italy needed, but rather the men and the will."² Still, some tendencies and ideas distinguish fascism so distinctly from all other movements, that an attempt will be made to characterize it.

¹ *Gerarchia*, May, 1925.

² Speech of Mussolini at Udine, September 20, 1922.

CHAPTER III

FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FASCISM

ATTENTION is frequently drawn by scientists, churchmen, politicians and many others to the gradual disappearance in our present civilization of those old-time values that were characteristic of former generations. Thus, individualism, which finds its present political expression in liberalism and democracy, may ultimately lead to the disintegration of the family as an economic and social unit to which every member owes tribute, in which every one can rely on every one else, and in which a refuge can be found in case of need. No longer is the home the center of existence, to which every member of the family will return, no matter how far he may go nor how long he may stay away; no longer is the town or district where we grew up the place where we root, drawing our strength out of the native soil. Some internationalists have even deprecated the love for one's country as narrow-mindedness. Religious faith is regarded as characteristic of a small mind, unable to grasp the significance of the teachings of modern science. The mysteries we are encountering in our attempt to explain life and the universe, are not attributed to a supernatural, sense-transcending power, but are explained by the infancy of our mind and our lack of scientific knowledge. The interpretation drawn from the mechanical world furnishes the basis for a materialistic conception of life, which denies that spiritual and ethical values may convey a happiness equal or superior to material well-being.

It is alleged that the incorporation of these new ideas into the national mentality has led nations to prosperity and

world domination, and that the tardiness in discarding these discredited old values was in large measure responsible for the economic and political setback of Italy. But the Italian characteristics which are frequently regarded abroad, if not as the products of an inferior mentality, at least as the results of a limited education, are intimately interwoven with Italian civilization, and in a sense constitute its stronghold, so that their elimination would mean surrendering to a foreign conception of life. Therefore the fascists, together with the nationalists—the two parties having been fused in 1923—proclaimed that what had furnished the background for Italy's greatness could never be of low value, but on the contrary constituted the pride of Italy, and should be acknowledged, preserved, encouraged and developed, so as to make Italy again a foremost nation.

While the fascist policy tends to bring together the Church and the State, while a strong family feeling is in every way encouraged, fascism regards as its foremost duty the cultivation among the people of love for the mother country. Realizing that patriotic sentiments could not yet be strongly developed in Italy, as it is not long since the various provinces freed themselves from foreign domination and united in the Kingdom, and in the belief that national traditions and a long glorious history are apt to have a favorable influence on national feelings, fascism goes back to the Roman Empire. It proclaims that the nation is neither confined to the number of individuals living in a given territory at a given time, nor to the duration of their lives, and that it is not defined by the set of ideas that are characteristic of them, but that the nation also includes all generations past and those to come, its life therefore being without limit, and that it is formed by the varying currents of their ideas and ideals. Hence any one generation has a task exceeding the span of its own existence: that of handing

down a nation steadily growing in strength and importance to those who follow. The interests of a class cannot extend therefore beyond the boundaries of the country, as other political doctrines have taught, for the nation is regarded as being above the individuals, single or grouped, who compose it. The state, entrusted with safeguarding the superior interests of the nation, must use the individual faculties of the citizens for its own ends, imposing its decisions, when necessary against their wishes since they are often animated by personal or party considerations. However, the state must not take all autonomy from the citizens, as that would hamper the proper development of the latter. It must rather supervise and control the expressions of their will, guiding them according to its own integral vision and educating them to a wider point of view.

Nevertheless, the fascists were not blind to the fact that the development of modern industry has brought forth that materialist conception of life which they denounce, and that the one was the logical, although perhaps not inevitable consequence of the other. But, in spite of being without a definite program, they expressed confidence that they would be able to solve problems as they presented themselves.

It is frequently asserted that the most important modern problem is the relation between capital and labor. To post-war Italy this question was foremost, as she was not only confronted with difficulties equal to those encountered by other countries, but, being a poor nation without any surplus to waste and anxious to compete in the world market, her international position depended upon the solution of this problem. Meeting the difficulties step by step, assisted by such organizers as Edmondo Rossoni and such theorists as Alfredo Rocco, fascism moved towards syndicalism.

While fascism has been defined as a combination of nationalism and syndicalism, and the fascist state as a national

syndicate state, and while the combination of a conservative or even reactionary political policy with a social policy that sometimes recalls socialism has been declared to be the most important characteristic of fascism, these characterizations seem too limited. Because the greatest initial difficulty was the solution of the labor problem, and because fascism regarded it as its foremost duty to strengthen the love of country, syndicalism and nationalism became characteristics of fascism as the first examples of the integration of factors that had been declared irreconcilable. It is this attempt to integrate all existing elements, whether or not they are theoretically consistent and can be rationally grasped, that is a fundamental characteristic of fascism, and it finds its present political expression in the fusion of a Right political activity and a social policy sometimes tending towards the Left. At another time, when other needs arise, this integrating capacity of fascism may result in a different expression.

Furthermore, to define fascism as national syndicalism, would amount to compressing it into a formula. Fascism has refused to become a rigid doctrine, being aware that theories are an abstraction of the mind, never fully consistent with life and experience. It is the fascist opinion that many a difficulty is due to the attempt to solve problems according to a theoretically consistent doctrine, to demand that life conform to a theory, rather than to disregard a preconceived generalization and to cope with the actual situation. Guided by the desire to solve all problems with reference to their effect upon all other factors, fascism tries to solve difficulties as they present themselves, one by one, according to the actually existing conditions. This pragmatic approach of fascism has rendered possible the attempt to integrate the old sentimental values with the requirements of modern industrialism. Fascism therefore may in a sense be regarded as a blend of idealism and pragmatism.

While the refusal of fascism to allow its tendencies to be cemented into a doctrine, which is an essentially youthful attitude, has sometimes had the advantage of permitting prompt action, and has made it possible to unite the followers of opposing political ideas into the same party, on the other hand the uncertainty that is a necessary result of the absence of a guiding concept, has frequently caused the Government to pursue a policy of experimentation which may turn out to be burdensome for the country. As we go on to describe the fascist plan for a solution of the problem of capital and labor, we shall have occasion to point out some facts, results of the tendencies just explained, which differentiate the fascist governmental policy from that of most other countries.

CHAPTER IV

SYNDICALISM: FROM SOREL TO THE FASCIST CONCEPTION

GEORGE SOREL is generally regarded as the theoretical originator of syndicalism in France. Sorel attempted to transfer the labor problem from the field of politics into that of pure economics. Denouncing the present social order as unjust and regarding the laborer as deprived of his fair share by the profiteering employer, Sorel advocated the reorganization of society in favor of the wage-earner. The workers of a given enterprise or a given trade should unite into one syndicate, and this executive organ, rendered powerful by the rigid discipline of its members, should by aggressive tactics push the employer back, step by step, while the central syndicate organizations should counteract the policies of the united employers. The employers, gradually deprived of all means of production, would finally surrender legal ownership of them to the united employees. The wage-earners would thus become the sole producing force of the population, and therefore exclusively entitled to represent it. The state, which in its democratic and liberalistic form is an organ of control in the hands of the bourgeois class, should simultaneously be eliminated and replaced by the union of all workers. To attain this end, the workers and their leaders should neglect no opportunity to weaken the property-holding class by revolutionary action. Thus, while violence is declared legitimate and desirable, parliamentary action is denounced, for parliament, having degenerated, should be replaced by the elite of the syndicates. Should this reformatory process be carried on in all industrialized countries, the capitalist society, in opposition to which syndicalism was

born and developed, would ultimately be succeeded by an international syndicalist society.

Although this scheme had a strong appeal for the workers, Sorel realized that the wage-earners could never be permanently attracted by this vision, and would sacrifice it, rather than yield immediate economic advantages. To avoid this the leader must keep his short-sighted followers in a state of excitement, picturing to them a general strike of all workers, as a result of which all production will be arrested, thus illustrating the sole productivity of the wage-earner, who, to save society from ruin, will take over complete control of the means of production. This admitted myth would have the advantage of justifying the rigid discipline of the workers.

The syndicalist doctrine as conceived by Sorel was brought to Italy by Arturo Labriola at the beginning of the twentieth century. The publication of the Italian translation of Sorel's *Socialist Future of the Syndicates*¹ in 1903, gave a strong impetus to the syndicalist movement, which opposed the evolutionary and pacific methods of the democratic socialists, represented by Filippo Turati and Claudio Treves. The friction within the socialist party resulted in the definite expulsion of the syndicalists in 1908. Immediately after the war, at the nationalist congress in Bologna, in 1919, Alfredo Rocco advocated the incorporation of syndicalist ideas into the program of the nationalist party, while even before the war some of the revolutionary syndicalists, such as Roberto Forges-Davanzatti and Maurizio Meraviglia, had become nationalists, and thereby abandoned their anti-state attitude. This drawing together of the two movements of nationalism and syndicalism prepared the way for the so-called integral syndicalism of fascism.

¹ Translation by Carlo Modini in the *Avanguardia Socialista*, Milan, June-November, 1903, Anno II, nos. 26 to 48.

Contrary to the syndicalism of Sorel, which gives consideration only to one class and tends to change society in its favor, integral syndicalism, regarding all classes as productive, wishes to assign to each its own place in the national complex. Accepting therefore not only capitalism, but the capitalist, as useful and necessary for efficient production, private activity is encouraged as being the best driving force for the increase and improvement of production. It is believed that man, except in moments of exaltation, due to his human nature, primarily works for himself and for those he loves, and only in the second instance and indirectly for the benefit of the community. Fascism regards his continuous striving to accumulate capital and to acquire property to improve his and his family's position as valuable, maintaining that man, by holding property, acquires a greater personal pride, as a result of his position. Property, however, must show a consciousness of its social and industrial function by co-operating with the non-property-holding classes, in its own interest as well as for the benefit of general production, every increase in the latter securing for the nation a more favorable position in the world market.

The peaceful coexistence and collaboration of the different classes, necessary prerequisite for national unity and national strength, which finds its outward expression in the co-operation of capital and labor, is further facilitated by the substitution for political parties of economic groups, of which all productive citizens, by virtue of their profession, necessarily form a conscious part. According to the theory of integral syndicalism, discussion between the different factors of production takes place in its ultimate instance in parliament, where the different occupations find technical representation, and is thereby not only legalized, but withdrawn from the arbitrariness of the politician. Furthermore those who, as parasites of society, contribute in no way to the national

well-being, falling outside the realm of any class and hence lacking representation, are excluded from legislation which is enacted by parliament to meet the needs of the different groups. As in a parliamentary body so composed all productive citizens are represented, the chamber is also entitled to deliberate on national matters.

However, in representing their own interests in parliament, the classes must consider the national good, since the nation as an integration of all classes is superior to them. Guardianship of these more remote and less tangible interests as against the immediate economic advantages of the different classes is entrusted to the state, it being regarded as the concrete expression of the nation. As such, although comprising the different classes into which individual citizens are grouped, it is a unit, superior to any part composing it. Therefore the state, representing all of its subjects and being responsible for them before other countries, cannot allow any class or group of individuals to enter into unauthorized international affiliations, but must reserve for itself the right of supervising and controlling their international activities.

To ensure unity of representation of the different interests, only one organization is recognized for a given occupation, which is in duty bound to guard and promote the interests of all those belonging to the same group, and may in turn impose financial contributions upon enrolled as well as non-enrolled members. Legal recognition of the occupational organizations, which are composed of workmen's syndicates as well as of associations of employers or intellectuals, devolves upon the state. As the highest authority, possessing the greatest integral insight, the state, by granting recognition to an organization, approves of it and takes over responsibility for it. Hence it can only confer recognition upon those associations which in turn accept and support it in its existing form and do not propose to modify it

or even theoretically to advocate its overthrow. Therefore the economic organizations, representing, binding and taking care of all those belonging to the same group, can grant the privilege of membership only to those giving absolute proof of their political faith, and participation in the activities of the syndicates is naturally reserved to members. To be sure that an association does not modify its character after recognition, the state reserves to itself the right of supervising it, and, should there be serious reasons, of revoking its recognition. Approval of the constitution, of the budget and of the officers, whether they are elected or nominated by the higher grade association, forms part of the state control. By the repudiation of the democratic principle of free elections, the fascist principle of hierarchy is established.

While the various associations classify producers into groups of employers and employees, and hence follow a socio-economic division, and while the recognized organizations represent the different classes before the state, corporations are also to be created, as state organs without legal personality, interested in production at large and in different fields of labor, within which they include both employers and employees. They are to be national in scope, although interested and active in local matters, and combined, represent all branches of production. The activities of the corporations consist in the co-ordination and more efficient regulation of production, promoting collaboration between employers and employees as well as between competitive employers and encouraging all movements aiming at an increase and improvement of output or at a reduction in price. General rules, on technical training and apprenticeship for example, may be issued by the corporations, and the exclusive right to establish employment agencies may be granted to them.

Only associations having acquired full legal personality as

representative bodies, may enter into agreements with other organizations, observance of which is assured by law as a logical consequence of their legal recognition. In case of conflict or disagreement, self-defense, conceived in a violent manner, such as by strike or lockout, is not permitted, as thereby production would be arrested, which is disadvantageous to the nation and which violates the basic principle of labor as a social duty. When retardation or stoppage of production is threatened as a result of a labor controversy, or a dispute arises on other grounds, the corporation concerned or its representative must intervene for conciliation, and should its efforts fail, the case must be brought for decision before the labor court. The same court, when requested by one of the parties, is to undertake the determination of new labor conditions whenever it regards this as necessary because of a shift in the socio-economic equilibrium. Since no labor code exists, the decisions of the court are rendered according to equity. The competence of the court on economic matters is said to be ensured, as two experts, who if possible should be neither capitalists nor laborers, but technicians or intellectuals, are added to the regular judges. The functions of the experts are not limited to giving an advisory opinion, but they are given a vote in deciding the controversy the same as the other judges. Conflicts arising between individuals on the interpretation of collective labor agreements are submitted to the ordinary court, but two experts are called in as advisors.

The doctrine of integral syndicalism just explained has been attacked by persons adhering to different political conceptions. Thus the democrats, believing that the state is an executive organ directed by the public will, repudiate the view that it is a unit power, superior to any part composing it, and that as the supreme judge, it has the right of a far-reaching control over individual and group activities. Hence

state paternalism, even if advantageous to the citizens, is to be rejected, because it curtails their freedom in attempting to discipline it. In like manner, the induction of individuals into organized occupational groups is regarded as limiting their free development and as pressing national life into specific channels. On the other hand the socialists resent the state control of international affiliations and oppose the acceptance of private capitalism. Others have reproached the fascists in that they exploit the weaknesses of the Italian people, for, if it is true—as some maintain—that the Italians as yet are incapable of self-government, perhaps as a result of the century-long foreign domination, the state should not reserve all decisions to itself and limit the free expression of the will of the citizens. Full liberty should be granted to them, so that they may gradually become educated to it and learn how to use it from the errors they commit, the results of which they will have to bear.

But all these criticisms—and it would be easy to multiply them—move from different political points of view, while we shall limit ourselves to examining the inner consistency of the conception and its practical application and results. We may therefore in this particular study accept the state as being above individuals and classes, but we must inquire into the way that the fascists are arriving at this superior state, for, indeed, “the absurdity of the state becoming an organ of particular interests and at the same time the judge of conflicts coming up between them and the administrator of the general interests must be avoided.”¹

At the present moment the supreme power of the state concentrates in the person of Mussolini, who became the head of the Government through a coup d'état, and only recently was an attempt made by the Fascist Grand Council

¹ *Relazioni e Proposte della Commissione Presidenziale per lo Studio delle Riforme Costituzionali*, p. 115, Rome, 1925.

to regulate by law the succession to the head of the Government. However, the question persists in Italy, as the successor may not possess the qualities of Mussolini, and should he lack his great organizing ability and his intuitive faculty, the inconveniences of centralization may become evident. Not only do the central authorities, with whom decisions rest, frequently fail to have sufficient insight into local matters, hence running the danger of committing grave errors, but also, although such mistakes will be severely criticized at the periphery, the discontent does not become known to the responsible persons at the center. Furthermore, bureaucracy, besides being inefficient and leading to an ever-increasing number of rules and regulations, tends to transform even minor difficulties into serious cases. In every hierarchy personal dislikes, jealousies or sympathies may gain an undue influence on the decisions of those whose rank permits them to determine the fate of their subordinates, for, even should the leading personalities be above personal discriminations, such perfection cannot be expected from every subordinate.

Fascism, advocating the idea of a single syndicate for any one occupation, has explained that associations representing the same branch of industry, but belonging to different political parties, have frequently engaged in bitter contests to the great disadvantage of the common interests represented. The idea of syndicate unity has been advocated in the past by the followers of different political parties, but it was demanded that any given representative association should be open to all those whom it represents on a footing of equality, since all would be bound by its collective contracts, and that it should be left to the ability of the various political factions to influence its actions in one way rather than another. Unity of representation would also be achieved by granting legal representation to the syndicate of

the majority. In either case the freedom of association would be respected, and, as all citizens would participate in the formation of the representative association, they would have a chance to express their opinions on the action of the state. On the other hand a rigidly controlled and exclusive syndicate may turn into an organ of suppression, reserving to relatively few the right of determining the policies of the organization and of discussing the actions of the Government, but binding by their decisions all those belonging to the same category or trade.

Certainly the system of the legally recognized single syndicate must offer serious guarantees of impartiality as to the admission of its members, in order to function really as an instrument of equilibrium and harmony between the different classes. And indeed the law [on the legal recognition of the single syndicate] will not have any salutary effect unless it is able to attract the greatest possible number of interested persons into the single syndicate, so that these consider the single syndicate as their real guarantee and as their true defense, and will participate in its activities and direction, in the designation of committees and in the nomination of representatives in the administration and in the state councils.¹

The suppression of all criticism that might have the advantage of informing the government of the attitude of the country may lead to the result that the state, without immediate and continuous contact with the citizens and hence not knowing their needs and desires, falls short of its integral and superior vision, and thus becoming an ever more unhealthy and intolerant superstructure, bars any different political conceptions, possibly better adapted to changed conditions.

However, fascism has declared that it wishes to replace political parties by economic groups and that it accepts the

¹ *Ministerial Report to the Senate, 1926.*

capitalistic class as an undeniable reality. Class struggle must be replaced by co-operation between the various factors of production, the unavoidable rivalries between them being reduced to economic competition. In the opinion of the fascists this would more closely conform to existing conditions, and would correspond to the desire of the people, for even if the class struggle as such really exists, and is not merely a fascinating creation of a socialistic mind, it certainly has been greatly exaggerated in order to be used as a political weapon.

While the opinion has been expressed that the idea of class collaboration is nothing but a myth, like the general strike of Sorel, and that the substitution of economic groups for political parties and of economic rivalry for the class struggle amounts to no more than a change in wording, yet we must recognize that this different means of expression has raised a doubt as to the inevitability of the class struggle. In fact, of course, the elimination of the class struggle in favor of a co-operation between the different factors of production can only gradually be achieved upon the conviction of all interested parties that this is advantageous to them, and upon their entry into a free agreement. Collaboration can be imposed temporarily by an exterior force, an action which may be justifiable in moments of crisis, but as soon as the restrictions are withdrawn, the class struggle will again be found to exist. Nor is it possible permanently to suppress the struggle, when there is a real conflict of economic interests, for these interests will seek a means of expression which will be all the more violent and illegal, the more intolerantly and the longer they have been denied. If, however, class struggle is the result of the growing consciousness of the working classes, who demand a better economic position and a greater influence on the government, and thus represents a natural phase in the development of socio-economic

life, all attempts to exterminate it will be in vain. In the same manner that the proletariat rises to a higher level by the slow process of education, and hence becomes a stronger force in society, it will gain an ever more satisfactory place.

Not only does no class voluntarily cede its place to another, but some persons believe that the point of equilibrium cannot be found except through open, legal and unrestrained discussion and through struggle, which serves as a measure of strength. They believe the strike to be the only means of determining the marginal productivity of the laborer, for only in the case of a cessation of work does the employer know with precision the loss he has experienced, and hence the value of the laborer's work to him. The equilibrium thus reached as a result of a struggle will be more correct and more stable than one imposed from without, because every class wishes to strengthen the position it has obtained and if possible, to gain a stronger one. These tendencies, mutually checking each other, tend to preserve the equilibrium.

Against this conception stands the conviction that the struggle may be decided at least in the short run by other than economic factors, and that it is by no means certain that the result will be a just equilibrium. Just as in civil life a disagreement between two parties is no longer carried out by the use of force, but is submitted to the court, in the same manner an impartial judge may decide a controversy between different classes, and this is a more important political function, for, when two individuals fail to agree on the terms of a contract, the deal simply does not go through, without any inconvenience for a third party, whereas, when the determination of the price of labor is in question, not only are employers and employees injured in case of a disagreement but production is arrested to the damage of the public.

If indeed a court is able to decide a labor controversy

and to establish a just equilibrium, strikes involve an unnecessary loss of energy. While other countries have taken into consideration the possibility of passing judgment on conflicts arising between different factors of production, fascism entrusts the magistrates also with the difficult task of determining new labor conditions, which must correspond to "the normal exigencies of life, the possibilities of production and the output of labor".¹ They must take into account the general "conditions of production and labor, the situation of the market and of labor, the situation of the money market and the variations in the standard of living of the laborers".² The competence of the court on such complicated economic matters has been questioned, as at least some of the judges lack a thorough economic and business training, and furthermore, having no law to guide them, can decide only according to equity. In answer to this objection it has been affirmed that economic controversies are often submitted for adjudication, and that even more difficult problems are so decided.

The impartiality of the court has also been doubted, for, although the fact that the decision of a controversy is entrusted to the regular court and not to a special arbitrator is a certain guarantee, the employers fear that the judges, feeling a natural sympathy for the weaker party, will tend to favor the workmen. On the other hand, non-fascist labor leaders believe that the juridical settlement of labor conflicts will be disadvantageous to the proletariat, because

collaboration has the consequence that in times of abundance the workmen cannot profit by it, because the court will not impose wages above the cost of living, while in years of crisis "the superior interests of production" will force judges to fix wages inferior to the cost of living.³

¹ *Charter of Labor*, article 12.

² *Ibid.*, article 13.

³ *Report of the Italian Confederation of Labor* on the subject "Syndicate Freedom", Tenth International Labor Conference, Geneva, June, 1927.

To decide according to equity, would therefore mean to base the sentence not only on conditions at any one moment, but to take into consideration the cycles of prosperity and depression while the charter of labor demands only consideration of conditions at the time of the trial. The court, by deciding a labor controversy, creates certain norms, which in turn will serve as a basis for future decisions, so that the same authority creates the law and carries it out. This fact which would be accepted in Anglo-Saxon countries without controversy is contrary to the principles of Roman law and has therefore been criticised by Italian jurists.

As a logical consequence of the compulsory jurisdiction of the labor court, strikes and lockouts are prohibited. It is said by opponents of fascism that the laborer is much more severely affected by this provision than the employer, for, while the strike represents the only effective weapon of the worker, the entrepreneur may reject the demand for higher wages, without resorting to a lockout, and while the worker is absolutely bound by the decisions of the court, the employer cannot be forced to keep the factory open, if he declares himself incapable of producing under the given conditions. However, according to the fascist conception, in that case the state reserves to itself the right to intervene by controlling, assisting, or taking over direct management of the enterprise.

In point of fact, capitalists have frequently been induced by a strike to organize and co-ordinate their enterprises more efficiently and to modernize them, and it is doubtful therefore if the outlawry of the strike really corresponds always to the general interests of production, although it is recognized that the plants can be perfected only up to a certain extent. Furthermore, it may well be that even extremely high penalties will not succeed in eliminating those great strikes which are an expression of the popular will, and that they cannot be

enforced, for the laborers will refuse to pay and cannot be all imprisoned, as this would lead to that suspension of work which the outlawry of strikes is to prevent.

In a sense it is true that by the cancellation of the right to strike the entire labor movement has been threatened, for, if the workers united in syndicates, it was originally in order to discipline strikes and to render them economically possible. But today everywhere the syndicates have also assumed other functions. Apart from those of welfare work which possibly could be fulfilled by the state just as well, labor associations are entrusted with collective bargaining, and fascist syndicalism even reserves to the various economic associations the right to designate parliamentary representatives. The criticism has been advanced in the general discussion of the policy that the principle of national sovereignty in itself excludes the representation of class interests, because parliament should rather be an integral expression of the nation. In legislating, it should deliberate according to general interests, in which task a parliament representative of various occupations would fall short, even should all groups of the country be included, because the sum of the particular interests by no means corresponds to the general, and certainly not to the future, interests of the nation.

Against this contention, that the citizen as such had been neglected in favor of the producer, it is held that the liberal state has over-emphasized the importance of the individual and not recognized the fact that he is part of an economic group, so that, although the citizens have apparently been represented in the democratic parliament, they always voted in accordance with class considerations. In our present economic world the average individual is interested in the deliberations of the chamber only in so far as they concern his economic position, and hence a more active participation of the country would be obtained by entrusting legislation to the economic groups.

In the discussion of parliamentary reform in the early days of fascism, it was said that, while democratic parliamentary representation has neglected the existence of economic groups, and thereby has failed to be a genuine expression of the nation, a single chamber, made up entirely of representatives of economic groups, would not adequately represent the country either, since the country includes individual as well as collective elements. Moreover such a system would put too much stress on technical ability. A representation of the political as well as of the economic interests is desirable but the two groups should not be united in the same chamber. Two houses should be created, one political and the other economic, whereby the danger that the delegates of the economic groups would vote according to their political opinion would be avoided. This might easily occur in case of a single economic chamber, or of one partly political and partly economic. When the economic parliament is counterbalanced by the existence of a political chamber, it might even be decided that the representation given to the various productive factors in the technical body should not be equal for all, but should correspond to their importance from the standpoint of national production, and that within each association the votes should be distributed according to the economic standing of the members. This would also present a certain guarantee that the technically most efficient members would be elected, rather than easy and persuasive speakers, as might otherwise take place, since professional competence does not necessarily coincide with the ability to defend effectively the interests of the group. The existence of a political as well as an economic chamber would also render it impossible for the syndicates to outgrow the state. This, however, is also out of the question because fascism has the motto: "The state above the syndicates and the syndicates free in the sovereign state."

The right of the state to recognize legally and to control the syndicates and the existence of the Fascist Grand Council actually alter the importance of Parliament, not only because most of the laws originate in or are drawn up by the Fascist Grand Council, but because the independence of the legislative power is no longer respected, since the state limits the legal recognition of the economic syndicates, and further reserves to itself the right of approving or rejecting the officers of the associations, who in turn represent their economic groups in parliament. The legislative power is curtailed by the power of the executive, as is that of the judiciary by the "law on the dismissal of state employees", which established the right of the Government to dismiss any employees, "who as a result of manifestations engaged in in or out of office . . . put themselves into a position of incompatibility with the general political tendencies of the Government".¹ This law expressly stated that "the magistrates of the juridical and administrative order" are not excluded.

The hierarchic principle as applied by fascism leads, therefore, to the rejection of the principles of the law's sovereignty and of the division of powers. The conception of the "integral state," which is entrusted with disciplining any expression of its citizens, single or grouped, is opposed to that of the "juridical state". While, on the one hand, fascism rejects political parties in favor of economic groups, on the other it maintains that "only political action is capable of creation".² This conception is not only inconsistent, but, just as the socialist labor policy in Italy is said to have been ruined by the political action of the party, so the realization of the syndicate program of fascism is hampered by political factors, as we shall discover when examining the application of the system.

¹ The law passed the Chamber on June 20, 1925.

² Carlo Costamagna, *Lo Stato Corporativo, quale Stato di Diritto*, p. 14, Rome, 1928. Edition of the *Diritto del Lavoro*.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FASCIST SYNDICATES

THE close of the World War presented the serious problem of finding employment for the returning soldiers at a moment when industry was struggling to readjust itself to peace conditions. Mussolini as the editor of the *Popolo d'Italia* had expressed his attitude in the words: "To turn towards labor returning from the trenches", but he advanced no precise program on how to utilize, calm and discipline the turbulent forces. Influenced by the over-charged war atmosphere, Mussolini and his companions, who later were to turn towards conciliatory syndicalism, participated in urging the workmen to strive for a better standard of living and advanced at times even more radical demands than the socialist leaders. Thus, in 1919, they proclaimed a strike of the metal workers, in order to obtain the 44-hour week with pay for 48 hours, and the *Unione Italiana del Lavoro*, a revolutionary although nationalistic labor organization, to which many future fascists belonged, organized the occupation of the Gregorini establishment in Dalmine. In 1920, the *Popolo d'Italia* applauded the contract which terminated the general occupation of the factories.

It was at the time of the Fiume expedition, which in the beginning was enthusiastically supported by Mussolini, that the emerging fascist syndicalism found in the constitution of the Free State a labor program that could well give a direction to its movement. Indeed, the syndicalist state as elaborated by Alceste de Ambris and presented in the poetical wording of d'Annunzio in the *Carta di Carnaro*, rested on a

capitalistic basis, and, taking due account of the capitalistic class, advocated collaboration of the various economic groups in the general interest of production.

However, fascist syndicalism had not quite decided what course to take. The movement, having originated among the rural population of the province of Ferrara, passed in May, 1921, from the leadership of Italo Balbo to that of Edmondo Rossoni. In September of the same year, their executive body, the *Camera Sindacale del Lavoro*, entrusted A. O. Olivetti with the presentation of the so-called *Manifesto of the Syndicates* to the *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* (now a revolutionary syndicalist organization), which outlined the conditions of a possible collaboration of the two groups. Failure to reach an agreement and the equally unsuccessful attempt of Rossoni to arrive at an understanding with the socialist Confederation of Labor, imposed upon the leaders the task of creating an independent syndicate movement. On October 20, 1921, the following points were emphasized:

(1) The syndicate movement of the manual, technical and intellectual workers and of the office workers [should have a] decidedly national character.

(2) Syndicate action [should be] directed with a high sense of responsibility; disciplining and harmonizing the interests of all groups and productive classes with the general interests.

(3) A syndicate policy [should be adopted] which not only tends towards economic conquests, but which furthers and elevates the laborers to the dignity and capacity of participation in the national programs of production, of culture and of the law.¹

The national attitude of fascist syndicalism, which distinguishes it decisively from all other Italian labor movements and is also the basis on which the collaboration of the

¹ Edmondo Rossoni's report to the third national congress of fascist syndicates quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 8, 1928.

various classes rests, was a heritage of the interventionist movement of 1915, and was strengthened by the experience of some of the syndicalist leaders in foreign countries. Thus Edmondo Rossoni has stated:

We have seen our workers exploited and given little consideration not only by the capitalists, but also by the "comrades" of other countries. Hence we know by experience that internationalism is nothing but a fiction and a hypocrisy. Therefore, above all, one must work for one's country, love one's country.¹

When in December, 1921, the fascist party drew up its statutes, we find this point of view again expressed:

Fascism does not believe in the vitality of the various internationals, either red, white or any other color, because they are artificial and formal structures. They include only minorities, more or less convinced, as against vast masses of the population whose life has an independent course of its own, where organic and vital changes take place, and before which international arrangements and arguments must fall to the ground, as recent experience bears witness.

By this time the syndicalist movement formed a definite part of the party program, as the statutes show:

Fascism cannot ignore the historical fact of the development of corporations, but wishes to co-ordinate that movement to national ends. . . .

The corporations are to be encouraged, with two fundamental objects: that is, as an expression of national solidarity and as a means of developing production.

The corporations must not tend to deny the individual in the collective mass, levelling arbitrarily the capacities and forces of single persons, but must rather further and develop them.²

¹ Speech of Edmondo Rossoni at the first congress of corporations, Milan, June, 1922, quoted from *Le Idee della Ricostruzione*.

² In the fascist phraseology the word "corporation" was used for the expression "national federation of syndicates" up to 1925.

Finally on January 24, 1922, a congress was called in Bologna, in which the directorate of the fascist party participated, and where on the motion of Michele Bianchi (then secretary of the party), the national corporations were created and defined as "national organizations, consisting of combinations of the various provincial syndicates interested in the same kind of labor and industry". The National Confederation of Syndicate Corporations, being the supreme organ, proclaimed the following principles:

- (1) Labor constitutes the sovereign title which legitimizes the full and efficient citizenship of man in the social order;
 - (2) Labor is the resulting force of all efforts, harmoniously directed towards creating, perfecting and increasing whatever makes for the material, moral and spiritual well-being of man;
 - (3) All those who in any way employ or dedicate their activities to the aforesaid ends, are indiscriminately to be considered as laborers, and therefore the syndicates must prepare themselves to welcome them under appropriate classifications and in a variety of groups, without any demagogical ostracism.
 - (4) The nation—considered a superior synthesis of all material and spiritual values of the race—is above individuals, groups and classes. Individuals, groups and classes are instruments, made use of by the nation to gain a better position.
- The interests of individuals and of groups acquire legitimacy on condition that they are maintained within the frame of the superior national interests.
- (5) Syndicate organization, which is the instrument of defense and of the conquest of labor over all forms of parasitism, must tend to develop in the organized masses the sense of a conscious creation of syndicate activity, of the complexity of social relations, spreading the conception that besides the class, there are the nation and society.¹

By advocating the conception of a nation, superior to in-

¹ Quoted from *Le Origini e lo Sviluppo del Fascismo*, p. 179, edited by the fascist party.

dividuals, groups and classes, fascist syndicalism enters upon a course which will logically lead to the recognition of a strong state as the expression of the nation, to which wide powers of control are conceded, so that it may be in a position to safeguard the general interests against those of the various national groups. By this interpretation, nationalist syndicalism breaks with the doctrine of the syndicalist school, which had found an expression in the constitution of the Free State of Fiume, in which the gradual absorption of the state in its present form into the syndicates was contemplated. A second difference between revolutionary and integral syndicalism consists in the absolute repudiation by the fascists of the class struggle. To this effect the Statutes of the Corporations declare:

... the dynamic law of social history consists, not so much in the interminable struggle between classes, tending to deny or confuse social functions, but rather in the struggle of capacities, that is to say, in the struggle of the groups which acquire the capacities to fulfil the leading functions, against the groups of those who lose the capacities corresponding to this function.¹

But if the capitalistic class is accepted, the right of holding property is not confirmed, as article IX of the statutes shows:

The Confederation, considering property not as the absolute dominion of persons over things, but as a social function, intends to regulate the intimate relations between workmen's syndicates and employers by means of intermediary organs, formed of competent committees, which shall have full powers as arbitrators in cases when questions cannot be settled by direct means.

In this passage the principle of compulsory arbitration is foreshadowed. On the other hand the Confederation hesi-

¹ Article V of the Statutes, quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928.

tated to take a rigid attitude on the question of international affiliations, recognizing that seventy-five years of socialist propaganda had led the workers to seek international affiliations, and not wishing to deter them. A compromise was therefore adopted in the Statutes: "Members of parties of an anti-national character must give absolute proof of their attachment to the principle of the Confederation."

After thus outlining its program the National Confederation of Fascist Corporations started an active propaganda. On March 30, 1922, the paper *Il Lavoro d'Italia* was founded in Bologna, where the Confederation had its headquarters. On June 4th, 5th and 6th the first national congress of the Confederation was called in Milan under the chairmanship of Mussolini. It was attended by 473 delegates, representing half a million organized workers, united into 2125 syndicates of agriculture, industry, commerce, transportation, public service, the intellectuals, technical directors, and the theater. "With this congress Italian labor enters completely into the history of the nation".¹ Edmondo Rossoni, the president of the Confederation sharply rejected the socialistic idea of tending to overcome the capitalistic order of society, by declaring: "As long as the laborers are not able to demonstrate that they know how to produce more and better than the capitalistic system, they are not worthy of governing society."

Indeed in these months immediately preceding the control of the Government by the fascist party, no concessions were made to the workers in an attempt to strengthen the syndicalist movement. On September 2, 1922, Mussolini stated in the *Popolo d'Italia*: "Fascist syndicalism is selective; it does not seek the masses, but neither is it so stupid as to reject them when they come spontaneously."

¹ Speech of Rossoni at the congress, quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 7, 1928.

Again: "Fascism does not flatter the proletariat, nor does it endow it with all virtues, with every sanctity, as the socialists do, always ready to burn incense in front of the laboring masses."¹

Fascist syndicalism, in contrast to all other labor movements—from the standpoint of its political leaders at least—was not created as a result of the desire to better the moral and economic position of the laboring masses, nor were the syndicates at this period regarded as instruments of propaganda, to be used by the party to arrive at its political ends. Syndicalist action was adopted as a means of holding, organizing and disciplining the laboring masses in the fascist party. In his speech at Udine, which prepared the way for the "March on Rome", Mussolini stated: "We had to adopt syndicalism; we have done it".

This attitude is fundamental. We shall notice that although the syndicate program develops greatly and although important functions are entrusted to the syndicate associations, syndicate action has remained secondary to political action. The program was adopted, according to one point of view, because the natural tendency of social development lies in that direction, or—as others believe—as a means of supervising, controlling and dominating the population. Whatever interpretation we may accept, we must realize that fascism from the very start placed its political ideas above its syndicate program, frequently modifying its social program to conform with political exigencies.

After the "March on Rome", Mussolini, as the head of the Government, was obliged to expound his social program. In the Chamber of Deputies he declared on November 16, 1922:

Who says "work", says productive bourgeoisie and laboring

¹ Speech of Mussolini at Udine, September 20, 1922.

classes in the town and in the country. Not privileges to the first, not privileges to the latter, but guardianship of all interests which harmonize with those of production and of the nation.

The next day he repeated this idea:

If the capitalistic class hopes to obtain special privileges from us, they will never receive such privileges. On the other hand if some groups of laborers, rendered already sufficiently bourgeois-like, wish to exert pressure on the Government to obtain favors in elections, they will be disillusioned. They will never have them.

To the fascist proposal of class co-operation and guardianship of the interests of all categories, Filippo Turati opposed the standpoint of the socialists:

Either you will be syndicalists, and you will again have the blessed, deprecated class struggle, necessary and providential driving force of all historic progress, and plutocracy will rebel; or you will be the instruments of plutocracy, and you will lose the favor of the masses, disillusioned by a syndicalism expressed in words and betrayed in deeds.

For you will not extricate yourself from this dilemma: either labor is oppressed and does not yield; or labor is free and will oppose all violence and any leaning towards personal mastery.

Also many laborers thought that it would be impossible for the Government to put its social program into effect and believed the fascists to be in the hands of the property-holding classes. Again and again Mussolini saw the necessity of affirming: "The Government . . . is not, cannot be and must not be an anti-workers' Government".¹

But he did not renounce his idea that the nation is above economic groups, since this principle forms part of the fascist

¹ Speech of Mussolini addressed to the workers of the Lombardy Steel Works in Milan, December 5, 1922.

belief that they should defend the national good against attacks. Therefore the state, the fascist state, had, according to the fascist leaders, become the expression of the nation, and as such was above political parties and economic groups. Hence:

The Government . . . governs; governs for all, above all, and, if necessary, against all. Governs for all, because it takes into account the national interests; governs against any groups, be it composed of the bourgeois class or of the proletarians, that wishes to oppose its interests to those which are the general interests of the nation.¹

This conception of the state was accepted and propagated by the national corporations under the leadership of Rossoni, which demonstrated their adherence to the Government by adding the word "fascist" before their name. Early in 1923, the headquarters of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicate Corporations was transferred to Rome, but notwithstanding the fact that the fascist party was in power, the masses of the workers continued to adhere in part to the Catholic and especially to the socialistic labor organizations. In July, 1923, in his campaign address, Mussolini declared in the Chamber of Deputies with a gesture of the hand towards the socialist group of the Confederation of Labor: "You know that I should be happy to have in my Government tomorrow the direct representatives of the organized laboring masses." Although the representatives of the fascist syndicates protested against the opinion of the head of the Government that the socialists were still the true representatives of the working masses, Mussolini, seeking the collaboration of the socialist labor leaders, asked that they answer his speech, stating their attitude. After first refusing to take any action as representatives of the Confederation of Labor, because

¹ Speech of Mussolini to the laborers of Genoa, January 7, 1923.

their function in Parliament was that of socialist, and therefore political, deputies, (in reply to this opinion it was said that since fascism held the reins of the Government, only economic groups, not political parties, were important), d'Aragona, one of the officials of the Confederation of Labor, stated that they fully approved of the attitude of the Government, provided that the conciliatory speech of Mussolini were followed by similar action. This declaration satisfied Mussolini who communicated with the socialist labor leaders to the effect that the warfare between the socialist and the fascist syndicates should cease and be replaced by co-operation.

Indeed, about a week after this incident in the Chamber of Deputies, Mussolini sent two envoys to the Confederation of Labor, who, in the name of the head of the Government, offered three portfolios of secretary of state and five posts of undersecretary to the representatives of the Confederation, provided that they would consent to collaborate with the Government. They further declared that Mussolini realized that, although numerically the socialist labor organizations had declined, spiritually the masses still adhered to them and that the syndicalism of Rossoni had not met with success. A discussion took place during which the socialists pointed out that the conciliatory address of the head of the Government had been followed by the destruction of several offices of the Confederation of Labor, and that, even if theoretically they could conceive of their entrance into the Government, a minimum of self-respect necessarily restrained them in face of the fascist activities. They maintained that there was only one road to collaboration, and that was to stop all violence towards the socialist labor organizations and their members. When, after six months of tranquillity and unrestricted syndicalist activity, the workers would have had the opportunity to express their attitude in

free elections, they, the representatives of the Confederation of Labor, would consent to discuss with the fascists on an equal footing, each one presenting his own program and trying in common to find a basis for collaboration. The envoys of Mussolini declared that such a policy would be impossible, because fascism by its violent methods had attracted many low elements of the population; furthermore, it included many reactionary persons, and the minority of those who were sincere would fall victims to the *canaille*, if they renounced their policy of force. But the representatives of the Confederation insisted that it was impossible for them to enter the Government under existing circumstances, and that many measures of the fascists conflicted with their convictions—for instance the imposition of a tax on wages and the simultaneous abolition of the inheritance tax. In moments of financial distress it was conceivable that the workers should also be taxed, but the elimination of the inheritance tax was certainly an unjustified concession to capitalism. Therefore, should the representatives of the Confederation of Labor accept the proposal of the Government, it would not be collaboration, but a surrender to fascism, which was out of the question.

This answer did not satisfy Mussolini, and he asked the representatives of the Confederation of Labor to come and confer with him personally. The same arguments were advanced. Mussolini, in his desire to obtain the collaboration of the representatives of the workers, denounced the act of his finance minister de Stefani, who had abolished the inheritance tax, and the negotiations in which the Government was engaged to turn over the railroads to private capital, but the labor leaders definitely refused, although Mussolini reminded them that a similar opportunity might not occur again.

The firm refusal of the representatives of the Confedera-

tion of Labor did not signify that they had not seriously contemplated collaboration. Some of them were even in favor of it, believing that by entering the Government they might have an influence on the general policy which they could use to the advantage of the workers. But when Mussolini criticised and denounced the activities of his fascist collaborators before those who were still his enemies, all of the socialist labor representatives were convinced that sincere collaboration would be impossible and that Mussolini only wished to make use of them to attach the working classes to his Government, ridding himself sooner or later of the leaders, or that he wanted to discredit the representatives of the General Confederation of Labor in the eyes of the country because they had surrendered their principles to fascism. It is indeed possible that such an effect would have been the result, for some persons even criticised the officials of the Confederation for having agreed to a conference with Mussolini.

While these negotiations were going on, the Confederation of Fascist Syndicate Corporations held the annual meeting of its national council, a body composed of ten representatives of the organizations adhering to the Confederation, chosen by the executive councils of each federation. The principle was affirmed:

that the labor contract must not be the result of a blind class struggle, which renders just evaluation of the potentialities of the factory and the worth of the one who gives to it his own service impossible,—but a profound and conscientious examination of the conditions of production. The examination, made possible only by the creation of new associative relations between laborers and employers, leads to the decision that the class contracts shall be worked out with the intervention and under the control of the central syndicate organs.—[The Confederation] votes that the fascist Government, as an introduc-

tion to the legal recognition of the syndicate organizations shall order that the contracts developed by them without restrictions shall have legal value and that their observance shall be assured by the political authorities or by special labor courts, with immediate and final functions of arbitration on the relation between the productive groups.¹

The idea of a special labor court had been advanced in 1923 by Sergio Panunzio in an article "The Strong State" in the *Giornale di Roma*, and now another point in the fascist syndicalist program was to be definitely settled. Edmondo Rossoni had at times thought of the possibility of uniting laborers and employers into mixed syndicates. During 1923 the Confederation of Commerce had gone over to fascism. The General Confederation of Agriculture, which had protested on May 16, 1923, against "the growing power of monopolistic syndicalism, which will end by identifying itself with the very state . . . [and which] limits the free development of the farms," gave way to the Italian Federation of Syndicates of Agriculturists, an organization which was fascist in spirit. However the General Confederation of Industry refused to become a fascist group, and as its technical efficiency and morale were high, the Fascist Grand Council on November 16, 1923 rejected its dissolution or alteration. In presenting a motion to this effect, Rossoni at least temporarily rejected his idea of mixed syndicates, but he obtained an advantage for the fascist labor organizations:

In order to make specific the agreements and the actions of the above-named syndicate organizations, operating under the patronage of fascism and for the supreme welfare of production and the country, a special meeting will be called on a day to be decided upon and will be presided over by the head of the Government or someone who represents him.²

¹ Quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928.

² Motion of Rossoni, approved by the Fascist Grand Council, quoted from *Il Gran Consiglio nei primi cinque Anni del Era Fascista*, p. 97 (edited by the fascist party in the *Libreria del Littorio*, Rome, 1927).

The decision of the Grand Council and the resulting meeting at Palazzo Chigi on December 19, 1923, is said to have been an outcome of an agitation of the metal¹ workers in September of the same year, engaged in by the socialist and the fascist syndicates alike, when the employers negotiated with both organizations. On the order of Mussolini the employers entered into an agreement with Rossoni, but the workers accepted the decisions of the socialist association, the Italian Federation of Metal Workers (FIOM).

At this time the economic situation in Italy was serious. The industrial employers and the representatives of the fascist labor organizations met in Palazzo Chigi under the presidency of the head of the Government. Mussolini hailed the meeting as a milestone in the history of fascism and thus justified it:

We are in a difficult situation and we must recognize it: we cannot permit ourselves the luxury of having caprices. Only a long period of social peace can put us on our feet again. In the international market, enterprise fights bitterly against enterprise, economy against economy. In synthesis: we are in a position of inferiority and we must fight because we must live. To renounce the struggle means to renounce life, and that is impossible. I affirm that for Italy a long period of social peace is necessary; without this we will be irrevocably lost in the field of international competition. . . . In regard to the international situation, anything which may disturb the productive process must be eliminated by mutual understanding.²

¹ Throughout this study the Italian word *metallurgico* has been translated by metal . . . , since the English *metallurgy* means the science of smelting. The *industria metallurgica* in Italy is concerned with the manufacture of metal parts, such as screws, and with certain processes, such as welding and riveting. The trade is highly skilled and the industry is in no sense a "heavy" one.

² *Mussolini e la sua Opera, La Politica Sociale*, p. 158, *Libreria del Littorio*, Rome, 1927.

Mussolini thus pointed out that the fascist syndicalist program was a result of the economic position of Italy, and that collaboration of the various factors of production was necessary in a country like Italy. The meeting came to the following conclusion:

The General Confederation of Italian Industry and the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicate Corporations:

intending to harmonize their own activities with the policies of the national Government, which has repeatedly declared that it regarded the common will to work of the directors of industry, the technicians and the workers as the most secure means of augmenting the well-being of all classes and the fortunes of the nation;

recognizing the correctness of this political conception and the necessity that it be realized by the national productive forces;

declaring that the wealth of a country, a primary condition for its political strength, can rapidly increase and that the laborers and the factories can avoid the harm and the losses of the interruptions of work when harmony between the various elements of production assures the continuity and the tranquility of industrial development;

affirm the principle that the syndicate associations must not be based on the inevitable conflict between employers and workers, but must be inspired by the necessity of arriving at ever more cordial relations between the individual employers and workers in industry, and between the syndicate organizations, trying to assure to each of the productive elements the best conditions for the development of their respective functions and the most just compensation for their work, which attitude will also be reflected in the conclusion of labor contracts, according to the spirit of national syndicalism. . . .

and decide

(a) that the Confederation of Industry and the Confederation of Fascist Corporations shall intensify their work directly to organize respectively the employers and the workers in industry with the mutual intention to collaborate. . . .¹

¹ Article of Mussolini in *Gerarchia*, May, 1925.

This meeting of the fascist labor organizations with the industrialists was followed the next year by two equally important ones with the representatives of the confederations of agriculturalists and of commerce.

The development of the fascist syndicates was further favored by the law of January 24, 1924, which puts all labor organizations under the supervision of the political authorities and gives them the right to dissolve any organization, "when there are well founded suspicions attaching to it." On May 22, 1924, the national council of fascist corporations declared a national labor policy was only possible between associations resting on a national basis, and that therefore the other labor organizations should be excluded from collective contracts. But this exclusive privilege was not immediately accorded to the fascist syndicates. In September a Commission of Fifteen was appointed, composed of outstanding senators, deputies, professors, publicists and state employees, with Giovanni Gentile as president, to study the problems of the corporative state and of constitutional reform. It had its first meeting on October 28, 1924, the second anniversary of the "March on Rome". In November the second national congress of fascist corporations, called in Rome and attended by 1,000 delegates representing 1,750,000 members, reaffirmed the social value of every kind of work and the principle of class collaboration.

The next year the Commission of Fifteen was increased to eighteen members, who began their study on January 31, 1925. On April 13 of the same year President Gentile described their work before the Fascist Grand Council.

The commission was unanimous in proposing the legal recognition of the syndicates. The majority was against the recognition of only one association for any group, and the only member who favored it ceased his opposition to the majority's attitude when they finally adopted the motion:

However, it must be well understood that the state can recognize neither those syndicates which do not recognize the state, or follow aims, contrary to the interests of the nation, or those which belong to international or foreign organizations, which impose restrictions of obedience or discipline on them, incompatible with the bonds of obedience and subjection to the state.¹

Thus while legal recognition was withheld from the socialist labor organizations, it was not yet expressly stated that it would be reserved to the fascist associations, as the Catholic syndicates could fulfill the requirements as well. Legal recognition was to carry with it certain privileges, such as the exclusive right to establish employment agencies. Such privileges were to be conceded to the recognized syndicates "in order that the organized economic groups may be persuaded to demand legal recognition since the commission does not believe it possible to compel this action on their part, as things are at the moment."²

After citing foreign examples of legal recognition and pointing out that Italian precedents had always been considered in order to ensure the application and enforcibility of collective contracts (conferring thereby a privilege on the syndicates without demanding any corresponding sacrifices), the commission rejected the conception of the syndicate state in which the syndicates may outgrow the state in favor of the "corporate state", that is, the strong state above the syndicates, guiding and disciplining them:

The commission believes that the conferring of legal personality on all economic syndicates which develop their activities in conformance with the aims of the nation, is insufficient to restore the sovereignty of the state over the elements of society which the former must contain and guarantee, and that it is insufficient

¹ Commission of Eighteen, *Order of the Day*, April 17, 1925.

² *Relazioni e Proposte della Commissione Presidenziale per lo Studio delle Riforme Costituzionali*, p. 102.

to assure the unitary discipline of the various activities upon which depend the strength and the greatness of the country.¹

Political precedents for groups under governmental control representing economic interests were found in Italy in the "competence groups"² and in the technical councils of the post-war period, and legal precedents in the chambers of commerce and in the provincial agrarian councils. The commission proposed, although not unanimously, the wider development of these organizations and the creation of corresponding organizations for other economic interests, freely elected by all citizens interested in the respective groups, and representing them before the state in an economic parliament. These groups were not to contain exclusively fascist elements. The dissenting members objected that the state would thus become a hierarchy of interests, and that individuals should not only consider their personal interests, but also those of the nation, for they are not only producers but citizens. Against this point of view of the minority the others argued that it is an historic fact that the population is divided into economic groups; and that the fascist principle of collaboration of the various economic groups in itself excluded the possibility that particular interests might supersede the general interests, and that in any case the state would be entrusted with disciplining and supervising the different groups.

The commission favored the creation of provincial corporate councils varied in their composition according to the local exigencies, which would bind the local economic groups to the national council of corporations. It was decided that this latter body should not constitute a third chamber,

¹ Commission of Eighteen, *Order of the Day*, April 21, 1925.

² The "competence groups," composed of citizens of every social class, were entrusted with surveying the social, economic and political life in their district, so as to be able to call the attention of the Government to any difficulty, before it had become serious.

but partly or wholly replace one of the existing houses. Against the proposal of the majority that the Senate should remain unaltered in order to safeguard the prerogatives of the King, and that the economic groups should be represented in Parliament, Professor Corrado Gini alone argued that the Senate should be composed of economic delegates and that Parliament should remain unaltered. This dissenting opinion was accepted by the Fascist Grand Council on October 8, 1925. It was also Professor Gini who advocated the representation of the various occupations according to their importance from the standpoint of national production. He also thought that the inefficiency of the political Parliament, due to the excessive number of delegates, could be remedied if the parliamentary assembly, after examination and approval of the state budget (whereby it would indirectly demonstrate confidence in the Government), would elect from among its members a small group, composed of the most capable and most competent members, which would function as parliament. But it was pointed out in opposition to this idea that such a group might gain an undue influence in the Government.

The secretary of the commission, Carlo Costamagna, opposed the proposal to entrust the economic organizations with the exclusive privilege of designating representatives, protesting that thereby a preponderant position would be given to the syndicates, and that a body so composed would not include all elements of the nation, and hence not adequately represent the country. He advocated that all organizations instituted for the promulgation and defense of the interests of any one group, should concur in the nomination of the delegates. The commission did not endorse the outlawry of strikes, nor the replacing of collective contracts by administrative decrees and of arbitration by state control of the enterprises, but favored compulsory arbitration in public

service industries, and demanded that power be given to the provincial corporate organs to provide for arbitration in any case in which this was requested by both parties.

The work of the commission, followed with great interest by the public and widely debated, was said to prepare the way for constructive action. In March, 1925, the fascists, under the guidance of Augusto Turati, and in agreement with the representatives of the workers of the socialist labor organizations, declared a strike in a metal establishment in Brescia, and when no understanding with the employers resulted, extended it, first to all metal establishments in the city, and later to all those of Lombardy. This strike, together with the establishment of the Commission of Eighteen, brought fascist syndicalism into the foreground of public discussion. According to the statement of Mussolini when reviewing the actual situation and the future prospects of the fascist labor organizations, the fascist

strikes have helped us to extend our influence, because they have dispersed mountains of foolish calumny and because many laborers have been convinced that fascism is not synonymous with slavery, that fascism is not the protector of a special class, but the protector of the nation.¹

On the proposal of Mussolini, the Fascist Grand Council, after reaffirming

its postulates of collaboration between all elements of production, provided such collaboration is intelligent and reciprocal, [and stating that] it considers the strike carried out by the corporations as an act of war, to which—except for public utility enterprises—recourse may be had when all pacific means have been tried and exhausted. . . . declares to the confusion of all adversaries, that fascist syndicalism can count upon imposing forces also among the rural masses, as has been irrefutably documented by the following facts:

¹ Mussolini, *Fascismo e Sindacalismo*, in *Gerarchia*, May, 1925.

(1) in all cities of Lombardy, Brescia and Varese, from Bergamo to Mantua, the metal workers have struck and returned to work, observing the orders of the corporations exclusively;

(2) in the city of Milan the order to return to work, given out by the corporations after agreement with the employers was obeyed by 5,697 workers on the first day, a figure which rose to 9,748 the second day, as even anti-fascist papers state. This fact warned the "FIOM" not to insist on the struggle already obviously lost.¹

The socialist federation of metal workers (FIOM) had indeed participated in the agitation, but their leaders give a different account of the situation. When the fascist organizations proclaimed a strike of all metal workers in Lombardy, the socialist labor organizations requested their followers not to abandon work, and only from fifteen to twenty per cent of the laborers acted according to the fascist orders. After this demonstration of its influence among the workers, the "FIOM" also declared a general metal workers' strike. Mussolini then sent Rossoni, the general fascist labor representative, and Farinacci, then secretary of the fascist party, to Milan, where they concluded an agreement with the employers. Thereupon the fascists declared the strike at an end. But the socialist labor leaders, desiring another demonstration of their strength, asked their adherents not to take up work, and consequently only from fifteen to twenty per cent of the laborers returned to the factories. Unable to obtain a separate contract with the employers, since the latter did not want to act against the wishes of the head of the Government, the "FIOM" ordered the end of the strike within a few days.

Another fact is cited to prove the loyalty of the laboring masses to socialism. The employers had been placed in a

¹ *Order of the Day*, presented by Mussolini to the Fascist Grand Council, April 24, 1925.

difficult position by the coexistence of the socialist and the fascist organizations, for even if the socialist workers were in the majority, refusal to negotiate with the fascist syndicates was impossible, since the fascist party held the reins of the Government. Therefore the industrialists decided not to enter into discussions with either association, but to treat with workmen's councils which were elected directly by the workers of every factory. As these councils were "organs of violent revolutionary propaganda,"¹ this practically amounted to a preference given to the socialistic Confederation of Labor. The socialist labor leaders affirm that it was due to this situation and to the strike of the metal workers, which was by name a fascist, but in reality a socialist victory, that the national council of corporations declared on April 24, 1925: "that there should be speedy recognition by the fascist state of the organization whose own activities are inspired by the aims of the nation, as expressed by the revolution of October, 1922. . ."

In June, the national congress of the fascist party declared itself in favor of the compulsory enrollment of all workers concerned into the one syndicate legally recognized for any given category. Thus the fascists renounced their opposition to syndicalist monopoly which had been rejected by the Commission of Eighteen, and on December 12, 1925, the directorate of the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates (the former General Confederation of Fascist Syndicate Corporations) renewed the demand for the exclusive recognition of the fascist syndicates as representatives of the workers. From this recommendation the Commission of Eighteen had also refrained. This proposal, together with the active propaganda carried on against the workmen's councils, led Mussolini to call a meeting on October 2, 1925, at Palazzo Vidoni

¹ Statement of Rossoni at the third national congress of fascist syndicates, quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928.

between the fascist labor organizations and the representatives of the industrial employers. The agreement reached runs as follows:

The Italian Industrial Employers' Federation recognizes the Confederation of Fascist Corporations and its affiliated organizations as the sole representative of the workers.

The Confederation of Fascist Corporations recognizes the Italian Industrial Employers' Federation and its affiliated organizations as the sole representative of the employers.

All contractual relations between employers and workers must be established between organizations affiliated to the above Employers' Federation and organizations affiliated to the Confederation of Fascist Corporations.

Consequently workers' councils are abolished, and their functions transferred to the local syndicates, which will exercise them with the corresponding employers' organization. . . .¹

The Confederation of Labor published the following protest against the pact of Palazzo Vidoni:

The General Confederation of Labor will continue to work, whatever be the maneuvers or measures put into force against it. The same will be the case with all the confederated organizations, and, when it is thought that our organizations have disappeared, they will be found once more in the factory, making the weight of their experience once more felt. They will continue to be the organizations which can best defend the interests of the worker.²

While on the one hand the principles of fascist syndicalism were being developed, on the other hand the fascist labor organizations as well as the state attempted to ameliorate the position of the working masses. In May, 1925, the national

¹ Quoted from the *Monthly Labor Review* of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, vol. xxii, no. 3, March, 1926, p. 162.

² *Ibid.*

organization *Dopolavoro* was established, with the object of unifying the various proposals for the physical and mental recreation of the workers after working hours. In June the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates founded the *Patronato Nazionale*, which is entrusted with spreading all over Italy, and especially in the small industrial and rural centers, knowledge of the benefits resulting from social legislation, and with giving assistance to the workers in their attempt to obtain enforcement of the laws.¹ In December, 1925, the Institute for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy was created, designed to unite all movements aiming at the same end, and to fight infant mortality by assisting mothers morally and materially.

The wider program of fascist labor legislation was thus realized, and the fascist syndicates were given practically a monopoly position. The Fascist Grand Council, following the meeting at Palazzo Vidoni, on the basis of the study pursued by the Commission of Eighteen, and on the proposal of Mussolini, worked out the draft of a law under the direction of the Minister of Justice, Alfredo Rocco. This law, after having been passed by both houses, was to become the fundamental statute of the Italian corporate state.

The decisions taken went far beyond the recommendations of the Commission of Eighteen. It was decided that only one syndicate association for any one given group of laborers, employers or intellectuals would be legally recognized and that this recognition would practically be reserved to the fascist organizations, since they alone corresponded to the ideas of the fascist state. The legally recognized associations would be granted special privileges, such as the exclusive right to represent the entire group of workers, employers or intellectuals, for which they had been created. Only individuals giving proof of their national sentiments and of a

¹ For fuller account see Chapter VII.

sympathy for fascism might become active members. The associations further were to enjoy the sole privilege of drawing up collective contracts, binding on all those exercising the same trade or profession. Associations of state employees were not to be created, as these fall directly under the jurisdiction of the Government. The non-fascist organizations were to exist as extra-legal associations, but in no case would they be regarded as representing the workers.

A labor court was to be established, which would guarantee collective contracts, and which was to be entrusted with the determination of new labor conditions if the parties failed to reach an agreement. Recourse to the labor court was to be compulsory for the public utility enterprises; in other cases its decisions could be invoked upon the request of both of the disputants, who were then bound to accept the decision of the court. Strikes and lockouts were to be prohibited in public utility enterprises, and could not be engaged in in any case before recourse to the labor court. The associations recognized by the state were not to enter into unauthorized international affiliations, and the state also reserved to itself the right of supervising and controlling their activities within the country. To connect the employers', intellectuals' and workers' associations interested in the same kind of work, the statute proposed the creation of provincial corporations for industry, agriculture and commerce, which would not be given legal personality, but would be state organs.

Even before this draft had received the approval of the houses, the Government proceeded to put it into effect by the decree of November 15, 1925, which made the pact concluded at Palazzo Vidoni a law, whereby the employers recognized that the fascist labor organizations had the exclusive right to represent the workers.

The law drafted by the Fascist Grand Council was presented to Parliament, accompanied by a ministerial decree,

referring to the considerations which had led to the drafting of it and emphasizing some points: "Only one syndicate exists, just as only one community, only one province, only one state exists."

The single syndicate was to be based on fascist principles:

In this manner, while not attributing to the legally recognized syndicate any characteristics of a political party, it is made certain that the elements of a doubtful national spirit can neither enter nor remain in the syndicate. Thereby the presence in the legally recognized syndicate of elements belonging to party syndicates becomes automatically incompatible with the very character of the syndicate. But the workers, artists or persons exercising a liberal profession, enrolled in associations (even if they are syndicate) which entertain relations, not with parties, but with organizations of a purely spiritual and religious order, may belong to the official syndicates and remain members of them as long as their activities in the bosom of the syndicates and outside conform to the principles of discipline and national order.¹

The necessity of national syndicalism was explained:

In a world equilibrium, where the positions of wealth and power are reserved to other peoples, the Italian proletarians suffer much more from the position of inferiority in which the Italian nation finds itself in relation to competing nations than from the avarice and the activity of the employers. If, therefore, a country exists where international syndicalism is absurd, it certainly is Italy.

The commission entrusted by Parliament with the study of the subject proposed certain minor modifications. Thus the annual financial contribution to be paid by all individuals engaged in a given kind of work, should not be fixed at a definite sum, but was to be limited to the compensation for

¹ Ministerial report to Parliament, December, 1925.

one day's work, and the formation of organizations of state employees should not be prohibited, but legal recognition should be withheld from them. The president of the labor court, before rendering a sentence, should make an attempt at conciliation, and recourse from the decision to the Court of Cassations should be allowed in certain cases. All these modifications were adopted, while the proposal that the presidents of the syndicate associations should be confirmed by the Minister of Corporations and not by the local authorities, was accepted only for the higher grade associations.

In the discussion in Parliament the deputy Graziadei maintained that the defense of the nation against the self-defense of the classes was identical with defending the bourgeoisie, but his contention was answered by the Minister of Justice, Alfredo Rocco, who declared that the fascist state was above all group interests, and that every state in the modern world must either suppress class self-defense or perish. To the fear, expressed by another deputy, Cavazzoni, that the free profession of religious faith by the Catholics might be restricted by the law, Rocco answered:

We want the separation between the syndicate and party politics, but not between the syndicate and national sentiment, or the syndicate and religious sentiment. The cult of the country is not political, it is the duty of all Italians; moreover respect for and practice of the Catholic religion, which is the religion of the state, is not and must not be a political instrument, but a form and a necessity of life.

The restriction of compulsory arbitration to public utility enterprises, basic industries and agriculture, was violently debated. The deputy Barbiellini-Amadei, in the name of the agriculturalists, protested against the discrimination, and the labor leader Rossoni declared that the restriction minimized the value of the law and that the opposition of the industrial-

ists was in reality an opposition to the fascist Government, in which they had no confidence. To this accusation A. S. Benni, the president of the Confederation of Italian Industry, replied that the labor court could render a sensible decision only on the basis of sufficient and adequate data, furnished to it by the industrialists, and that thereby business secrets would have to be sacrificed. Were the magistrates to commit an error to the disadvantage of the employers, the industrialist would run the risk of a serious loss. In a country such as Italy, he said, which was in need of capital and which should strive to attract investment, such a menace might have an unfavorable effect. Furthermore it was probable that the court would be rather inclined to favor the workers for political reasons.

The controversy was decided by Mussolini, who expressed the opinion that different treatment for agriculture and industry was unjustified in view of the modern interdependence of both economies, for, he explained, agriculture was rapidly becoming industrialized and many industries, such as the chemical and the clothing industry were getting their raw materials from agriculture. Furthermore a strike, occurring at a moment of bitter international competition, might be just as disadvantageous if not more so than one occurring at the time of the harvest, and in general the cost of the strikes and the lockouts was very high:

According to some calculations, there have been lost in the last five years, from 1920 to 1925, two hundred million workdays on the European continent and in the United States. The wealth wasted in consequence of this is evaluated at four hundred million sterling.

This attitude, taken by the head of the Government, induced Benni to declare that the industrialists would vote in favor of the proposal because they had faith in the im-

partiality of the fascist state, although they would not have accepted it under any other Government.

This dispute thus ended, the law was passed by the Chamber on December 18, 1925, and was brought before the Senate. The senatorial commission which engaged in its study declared:

Without any doubt, the success of the law will depend upon the enlightened and just application of the principle. . . . Indeed, if, in refusing or according recognition to associations, the public authority should deviate from the concepts of the law, . . . or if practically its doors should be closed to the associations and men that, although animated by national sentiments, are not enrolled in specified parties, it would impair that quality of the law which gives it its greatest value, that is its character of national solidarity and of justice among the different social classes; and inevitably the syndicate organizations, to which the integral representation of the various groups of employers and workmen is entrusted, would lose the people's confidence.

[Hence] the law will be excellent, if it is executed in a high spirit of moderation and of justice.

Several memoranda were presented to the commission: The Federation of Transportation and the Federation of Banks each wished to obtain separate representation, since they did not believe that they could be adequately represented by either the Confederation of Industry or that of Commerce because of their conflicting interests. The commission refused to take into consideration these details of actual practice, which were to be regulated by the Government. It requested an explanation of certain points from the Minister of Justice, who for instance explained that the prohibition of strikes extended also to cases where they were called to enforce the recognition of a collective contract.

In the discussion Senator Loria maintained that any labor movement by its very nature tended towards international-

ism, and that therefore the law struck a blow at the Italian labor movement, but this point of view was opposed by the head of the Government and the minister Rocco, who declared:

Experience shows more and more that an intimate solidarity exists in the bosom of a nation, and that this solidarity of the entire nation is far stronger than the motive of solidarity which may unite the working classes of the different countries.

In the same address Rocco stated:

We have no hesitancy even now in declaring that recognition will be granted to the fascist syndicates . . . [for] . . . by recognizing legally the fascist syndicates, we do not put syndicate organization into the hands of a party, since the recognition by the fascist syndicates of the principle of national solidarity and of the superior interests of production, and their acceptance of the principle of class collaboration are not a party program. If these principles have been especially confirmed and put into practice by the fascist syndicates, it is because fascism is not—in my opinion—a party, but a manifestation of the nation.

The law of April 3, 1926, having passed the Senate on March 11, 1926, came into effect with its publication in the official bulletin, the *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno* on April 14th¹ and the royal decree of July first² established the norms for its application. On July 2nd, a royal decree³ established the Ministry of Corporations, which was inaugurated on July 31, 1926. The ministry is divided into two administrative sections: the general directorate of syndicate associations, which supervises syndicate activity in

¹ Law of April 3, 1926, n. 566, *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, April 14, 1926, n. 87.

² Royal Decree, July 1, 1926, n. 1130.

³ Royal Decree, July 2, 1926, n. 1131.

general and is the last source of appeal in most cases, and the general directorate of corporations, which is to control the corporate organizations. The expenditures in connection with the establishment and the activities of the ministry are included in the state budget, and are partly defrayed from the contributions of the syndicate associations.

The legal endorsement of the exclusive privileges granted to the fascist syndicates fundamentally altered the labor situation in the country. Henceforth the workers could no longer choose between free labor organizations of different political faith, for all advantages were reserved by law to the one group. It became therefore perfectly natural for them to enter the legally recognized associations, and only those laborers who were decidedly opposed to fascism and wished to demonstrate it, even though this would be disadvantageous to themselves, remained in their former syndicates. But it must be recognized that even before the privilege of exclusive recognition had been granted to the fascist syndicates their membership had increased, as the following table shows:

TABLE I
MEMBERSHIP OF FASCIST SYNDICATES, 1922-1926¹

Enrolled members in	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
Agriculture	277,084	335,266	694,842	724,900	847,482
Extractive industries		21,985	45,565	76,390	86,019
Metal industries		64,689	134,070	184,200	150,516
Chemical industries		30,767	63,765	110,991	77,855
Textile industries		28,353	57,595	111,800	169,099
Water, gas, electricity		9,085	18,825	23,100	26,535
Glass and ceramic industries ..	72,000	7,799	16,165	18,910	23,333
Building industries		60,151	124,665	142,476	258,130
Press		7,618	15,789	23,630	42,078
Nutrition		15,409	31,925	62,100	93,843
Furniture industries		6,383	13,230	21,436	26,076
Transportation and communica- tion	43,000	48,376	100,145	125,495	127,715
Hotel business		20,091	41,650	47,850	..
Fishing		10,230	21,203	26,450	16,662
Sanitary organizations		10,844	22,475	26,825	..
Clothing industry		9,594	19,885	31,108	66,440
Intellectual professions	6,300	19,556	46,544	56,994	49,178
School		14,636	30,335	38,885	38,885
Theater	5,000	20,757	43,020	45,420	40,385
Office employment	31,000	89,269	185,000	192,500	126,277
State industries		9,578	19,735	24,841	56,286
Local public service industries...	10,000	..	..	..	..
Technical directors	8,700	..	..	..	..
Miscellaneous	5,000	17,175	35,595	..	..
Artistic industries	..	..	..	..	2,426
Banking employees	..	..	..	..	23,740
Commercial employees	..	..	..	..	62,483
Maritime and aerial transportation	..	..	..	..	127
Forest industries	..	..	..	34,210	..
Total	458,284	857,611	1,776,023	2,150,511	2,411,530

Even while competing with the non-fascist labor organizations, the number of collective labor contracts that were concluded by the fascist syndicates increased:

¹ Figures taken from the report of Rossoni to the third national congress of fascist syndicates quoted in *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928. It is realized that the figures for 1922, 1924 and 1926 do not add up correctly, but they are given in this form by the official source.

TABLE II
COLLECTIVE LABOR CONTRACTS, 1922-1926 (national—regional—provincial—local—total)¹

Field of Production	1922			1923			1924			1925			1926		
	n	r	t	n	r	t	n	r	t	n	r	t	n	r	t
Agriculture	..	1	15	..	..	8	..	..	37	..	..	56	..	..	..
Industry	..	3	16	..	..	18	..	..	40	..	..	55	..	..	..
Intellectuals	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	2	..	..	..
Banks	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..
Commerce	..	..	3	..	..	6	..	..	2	..	..	11	..	..	..
Transportation	..	..	3	..	..	7	..	..	..	..	..	21	..	..	..
Total	1	1	18	..	..	45	..	..	81	..	..	108	..	..	..

"n" = national, "r" = regional, "p" = provincial, "t" = total.

¹ *Ibid.* It is realized that the figures for 1924 do not add up correctly, but they are given in this form by the official source.

The *patronato* also had a considerable development in the years following its foundation, in the fields of industrial and agricultural accident compensation, old-age and invalidity pensions, maternity allotments and grants for unemployment. In addition a legal and a medical office were maintained at the service of the workers of the syndicate associations.

The national council of fascist syndicates convened in April, 1926, shortly after the publication of the so-called Rocco Law. It decided that, as the sole representatives of the workers, the fascist syndicates must take vigorous action to assure to the workers just but favorable collective contracts, and

that the problems of employment for the workers, of the mutual aid societies, of production, of accidents, of vacations with pay and of compensation for discharge, must soon be definitely solved, by taking over the most complete corporate control of the labor market, and by giving the workers unstinted assistance in cases of unemployment, illness, invalidism, old age and retirement, for only such guarantees can assure the tranquility and augmentation of production and a higher level of daily life for the laboring masses.¹

As the representation of the workers and the drawing up of collective contracts was reserved exclusively to the fascist syndicates and the organization of strikes was prohibited, the non-fascist labor associations lacked any syndicate objectives. The Catholics therefore dissolved their associations and contemplated the enrollment of their followers in the fascist syndicates, although they by no means completely endorsed the program. The Catholics had indeed always advocated class collaboration and the creation of a labor court, as well as the legal recognition of syndi-

¹ Motion accepted by the national council of fascist syndicates in April, 1926, quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928.

cate organizations and a central discipline. However, they had opposed the idea of a single syndicate, in favor of a free agreement among the syndicate labor associations. They believed that the right to strike should exist as an ultimate measure of defense, and the labor representatives should support vocational instruction and technical skill, minimum wages and the family wage (important especially in the rural districts of Italy). After the publication of the Rocco Law, the Catholics presented a memorandum to the Government in which they stated that they would permit their adherents to become regularly enrolled members in the legally recognized associations under three conditions: that the fascist organizations duly defended the interests of the workers, that they abstained from any political propaganda and that they permitted the existence of the *Azione Cattolica Italiana*, "a union of the organized Catholic forces for the support, the diffusion, the practice and the defense of the Catholic principles in individual, family and social life".¹ After six months the foregoing conditions were accepted under the personal guarantee of Mussolini and since then, whenever they are fulfilled, the Catholics enter into the fascist syndicates.

While the Catholics thus dissolved their own labor organizations, the socialist Confederation of Labor resisted. However, in the first days of November, 1926, their central office in Milan, their office in Rome and the office of the Italian Federation of Metal Workers (FIOM) in Turin, were invaded and destroyed by the fascists. On November 9, the police asked the representatives of the Confederation to return to their central office, but although they accepted, they perceived that a continuation of their activities was impossible. Therefore on January 4, 1927, a minority of six members, against seventeen

¹ Statutes of the *Azione Cattolica Italiana*.

who composed the directing board, decided upon the dissolution of the Confederation of Labor. This resolution was declared illegal and not binding upon the Confederation, since on November 17, 1925, and again on July 16, 1926, the sole right to decide on the future of the Confederation had been entrusted to the executive committee, "in order to give a unitary and centralized organization to the Confederation of Labor". The executive committee officially transferred the Italian Confederation of Labor abroad on January 10, 1927. This decision was endorsed by the International Syndicate Federation in Amsterdam on January 14, 1927.

The fascist syndicates having thus become in fact the sole representatives of the workers in Italy and the exclusive defenders of their interests, the Fascist Grand Council on January 7, 1927, adopted the idea of a charter of labor which should synthesize the principles of integral syndicalism and illustrate its actual application in Italy. The draft of the document was to include the following points:

Declaration of solidarity between the various factors of production, in the supreme interest of the nation.

Coordination of the laws for workers' insurance and welfare.

Coordination and modernization of the protective labor laws.

General rules for the provisions of labor contracts.

Several meetings were held at the Ministry of Corporations, at which the development of the charter was begun. While the employers demanded that it should not contain any clauses which would render the system inelastic and hence hamper and damage efficient production, Edmondo Rossoni published an article in which he requested the incorporation of certain points which would guarantee fair treatment and a decent standard of living to the workers. He declared that the workers agreed to observe absolute discipline and respect for their employers, and to work steadily and efficiently,

but they wished the charter to deal with the principles on which collective contracts were to be based, with labor controversies, with the problem of unemployment and the possibility of its solution, with the determination of salaries and of minimum wages, with the revision of wage-scales and the payment for piece work, with the maximum length of the trial period,¹ with working hours, with holidays and vacations, with illness, insurance and workers' credit, with military service, with changes in the ownership of enterprises, discharges and compensation and finally with syndicate representation. Rossoni also proposed the creation of shop committees in each enterprise, which would settle directly all ordinary questions between employers and employees, and emphasized again the obligation of mutual, exclusive recognition between the fascist employers' and employees' associations.

On the basis of these discussions, Mussolini himself drew up the final text of the charter, which was proclaimed on April 21, 1927, the supposed anniversary of the founding of Rome, which day the fascists had made the annual labor day.

Art. 1. The Italian nation is an organism, having aims, life, and means of action superior to those of the single or grouped individuals who compose it. It is a moral, political and economic unity which is completely realized in the fascist state.

Art. 2. Labor in all forms, intellectual, technical and manual, is a social duty. In this sense, and only in this sense, it is protected by the state. From the national point of view all production is a unit; its objects are unitary and can be defined as the wellbeing of the producers and the development of national strength.

¹ Any Italian worker who is discharged through no fault of his own has a right to an indemnity, proportional to the years of service in the establishment. However, before he is definitely employed, he is subject to a "trial period", during which he is paid for his services, and at the end of which either party may dissolve the contract.

Art. 3. Trade or syndicate organization is free. But only the syndicate regularly recognized and placed under the control of the state has the legal right to represent the entire group of employers or of workers for which it is constituted, to guard their interests before the state or other organized economic groups, to draw up collective labor contracts, obligatory on all those belonging to the same group, to impose contributions on them and to exercise delegated functions of public interest relating to them.

Art. 4. In collective labor contracts, the solidarity of the various factors of production finds its concrete expression in the reconciliation of the opposing interests of employers and workers, and in their subordination to the superior interests of production.

Art. 5. The labor court is the organ through which the state intervenes to solve labor controversies, whether they deal with the observance of contracts or other existing standards, or with the determination of new labor conditions.

Art. 6. Legally organized trade organizations assure legal equality between employers and workers, maintain the discipline of production and labor, and promote its perfection. A corporation constitutes the organization of one field of production and represents its interests as a whole. Since the interests of production are national interests, the corporations are recognized by law as state organizations by virtue of this representation.

Art. 7. The corporate state considers private initiative in the field of production the most efficacious and most useful instrument in the interest of the nation. Private organization of production being a function of national interest, the organization of the enterprise is responsible to the state for the direction of its production. Reciprocity of the rights and duties is derived from the collaboration of the productive forces. The technician, office employee and worker is an active collaborator in the economic undertaking, the direction of which is the right of the employer, who has the responsibility for it.

Art. 8. Trade associations of employers are obliged to pro-

mote in every way the increase and perfection of products and a reduction in costs. The representatives of those who exercise a liberal profession or an art, and the associations of public employees, join in the guardianship of the interests of art, science and letters, in the perfection of production and in the attainment of the moral aims of the corporate system.

Art. 9. The intervention of the state in economic production takes place only when private initiative is lacking or is insufficient, or when the political interests of the state are involved. Such intervention may assume the form of outside control, encouragement or direct management.

Next follows the provision that labor relations must be regulated by collective contracts "which must contain, under penalty of nullification, precise regulations on disciplinary matters, on trial periods, on the extent and payment of compensation, and on working hours".¹ Other standards were fixed, such as the fortnightly payment for piece work, additional payment for night work, the weekly rest on Sunday, the annual period of paid vacations, the claim of the worker to a discharge compensation if he is dismissed for no fault of his own, and the continuance of collective contracts in case of a change in the ownership of the enterprise.

The length of the trial period was not fixed, nor was the demand of Rossoni for the revision of wage scales taken into account. Also the establishment of minimum wages was refused:

Wages are not fixed according to any general standard, but are determined by agreement between the parties in collective contracts.²

In collective labor controversies, legal action cannot be started unless the corporate organization has first attempted recon-

¹ *Charter of Labor*, art. 11.

² *Ibid.*, art. 12.

ciliation. In individual labor controversies on the interpretation and application of collective labor contracts, the organization concerned has a right to interpose its agencies for reconciliation. Competence in such controversies devolves upon the ordinary court with the addition of assessors designated by the interested parties.¹

The consequences of crises in production and of monetary phenomena must be equally divided among all factors of production.²

Infractions of discipline and acts which disturb the normal functioning of the enterprise, committed by workers, are punished according to the gravity of the offense: by a fine, suspension from work, and, in serious cases, by immediate discharge without compensation.³

Only the state can investigate and control the phenomenon of employment and unemployment of the workers. The situation at a given time is a complex index of the conditions of production and labor.

The employment office organized on the basis of equality is under the control of the corporate organizations. Employers are obliged to employ the workers enrolled in said offices and have the option of choosing among the workers included in the list, giving preference to those inscribed in the fascist party and syndicates, and depending upon priority of registration for their final choice.

Trade associations of workers must practice selection among the workers, in order to raise their technical capacity and moral value constantly.⁴

The final section of the charter deals with the welfare of the workers and vocational instruction:

The fascist state has the following aims: first, the perfection

¹ *Charter of Labor*, art. 10.

² *Ibid.*, art. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, art. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, articles 22 to 24 inclusive.

of accident insurance; second, the improvement and extension of maternity insurance; third, insurance against occupational illnesses and tuberculosis as an introduction to a system of general health insurance; fourth, the improvement of insurance against involuntary unemployment, and fifth, the adoption of special forms of endowment insurance for young workers.¹

It is the task of the associations of workers to protect their members in administration and law with regard to accidents and social insurance.²

Assistance to individuals they represent, members or non-members, is the right and duty of the syndicates. These latter must carry out directly, through their own organs, their functions of assistance and cannot delegate them to other groups and institutions, except for objects of a general nature extending beyond the interests of any one category.

Education and instruction, especially vocational instruction, of those they represent, members or non-members, is one of the principal duties of the syndicates. They must support the activities of the national organizations with respect to the *dopolavoro* movement and other educational facilities.³

The significance of the charter, which, as indicated above, combines principles and definite regulations, has been much debated by the fascists. While some, like Rocco, regard it as a fundamental statute similar to the Bill of Rights, others, like Rossoni, maintain that, although it is "a document of very great importance because it offers to all workers a guarantee of their minimum rights",⁴ yet its practical value is limited, because the provisions are not precise and the employers take advantage of the vague terms. The Fascist Grand Council, in publishing the charter on April 21, 1927, had

¹ *Charter of Labor*, art. 27.

² *Ibid.*, art. 28 in part.

³ *Ibid.*, articles 29 and 30.

⁴ Speech of Rossoni at the national congress of industrial syndicates, May 6, 1928, quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 8, 1928.

decided that within the current year 1927 collective contracts should be concluded, renewed or modified on the basis of the clauses contained in the charter, and that the duration of the contracts must be such as to permit a wide margin of time for the enterprise, since adjustment to the new financial situation and to the difficulties of international competition is necessary.

On June 16, 1927, Mussolini notified the prefects that the charter had the same weight as the regular laws, but the labor guarantees provided for in the charter have not been generally applied; collective contracts frequently have not been respected and wages have been reduced in view of the difficult economic situation resulting from the revaluation of the Italian currency.

However, during 1927 and 1928, a series of governmental measures put into effect certain parts of the charter. On June 28, 1927, the ruling of the Labor Court was invoked for the first time by the Confederation of Agriculturalists and on July 14 its decision was rendered. On November 15, 1927, the Fascist Grand Council proposed the institution of local employment agencies, directed by a mixed commission of employers and workers under the chairmanship of the secretary of the local fascist organization, and also proposed prohibition of any other employment agencies. On February 26, 1928,¹ a Royal decree was issued in regard to the settlement of individual labor controversies, which provided for certain guarantees in case of failure to carry out collective contracts. The decree of March 29² made it obligatory for workers to take work through the official employment offices, and on July 5 Mussolini sent a message to the prefects, stating that only collective contracts duly deposited and published, could be enforced, and that only con-

¹ *Royal Decree*, February 26, 1928, no. 471, published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* on March 22, 1928, no. 69.

² *Royal Decree*, March 29, 1928, no. 1003.

tracts incorporating the principles of the charter of labor or providing for the establishment of similar standards within a definite period should be accepted.

Meanwhile, on May 6, 1928, the third national congress of fascist syndicates was held in Rome, attended by six thousand delegates representing over three million workers. Rossoni, in saluting Mussolini, declared: "This, our third congress, is a renewed declaration of faith, or rather, a new confirmation of our discipline and of our whole-hearted faith."¹

Finally, on December 13, 1928, a law was passed enabling the Government to issue any regulations necessary for the complete application of the charter provisions.²

The Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, which had called the congress, greatly exceeded in power and importance the central workers' organization for which the law of April 3, 1926, had provided. On the other hand, a general confederation of all employers had not been created, for it was maintained that, while the workers might have common interests, the problems that the employers encountered in their various fields of activity were by no means similar and could therefore not be represented as a whole.

The reorganization or dissolution of the workers' confederation had also been contemplated several times, but had never been effected, out of respect for its president, Edmondo Rossoni, who was the founder and the leader of fascist syndicalism. Nevertheless, on November 28, 1928, it was announced that legal recognition of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates had been revoked, and that the seven dependent federations of manual and intellectual workers would be transformed into autonomous confederations. However,

¹ Quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 7, 1928.

² Law of December 13, 1928, no. 2832, published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* on December 24, 1928.

they should be "regrouped into a general confederation of labor, having for scope the representation and guardianship of the general interests of labor, and to the chairmanship of which Edmondo Rossoni would be called."¹ In the midst of the general discussion on the reasons for and the importance of this edict, the newspaper of the Confederation, *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, which was the official mouthpiece of Rossoni, remained silent. However, to the provincial and local labor leaders who came to Rome for further information, Rossoni declared that only the exterior form had been altered, and that, although he recognized the difficulty presented by decentralization, in spirit and actual power the Confederation would remain the same. He could not carry this program out, since on December 10, Mussolini revoked his former decision and stated that "further effect will not be given to the plan for the creation of two general confederations of workers and employers."² Simultaneously the paper *Il Lavoro d'Italia* was replaced by *Il Lavoro Fascista*.

Thereby Rossoni ceased to be the leader of fascist syndicalism and direction of the movement was entrusted to the presidents of the seven confederations. But the Government believed that by placing a person in whom the workers had confidence at the head of the entire labor movement, the fascist regime would secure the support of the workers. Even before the dissolution of the General Confederation, some of the Italian socialists in Paris had been approached from time to time and a safe return to their country had been guaranteed to them if they would accept the direction of various fascist enterprises, but they had always refused. At

¹ Communication of the press office of the head of the Government, November 20, 1928.

² Communication of the agency Stefani, December 10, 1928 (in all Italian papers.)

the end of February, 1929, with the knowledge of Mussolini, a letter was communicated to Bruno Buozzi, secretary of the Italian Confederation of Labor, offering him complete amnesty if he would consent to take over the leadership of the fascist labor movement. Buozzi answered that, whenever he regarded it expedient to go back to Italy, he would do so without asking any privileges from anybody and that he had refused collaboration with the fascist Government in 1923, and again in 1926, and that he would not consider it now. Furthermore, if he still enjoyed the confidence of the Italian laboring masses, it was because he clung to his ideas, and he would lose it as soon as he surrendered to fascism. Even should they remain faithful to him, he could not improve the Italian situation, because the problem exceeded all individual powers. No man could make the workers support fascism.

The development of fascist syndicalism has been a gradual one, according to the idea of Mussolini: "The fascist revolution must make no leaps, it must walk." When commenting on the absence of a doctrine of fascism, the leaders explain that thought must not precede action, but that it is frequently an outcome of it. Hence, laws should sanction already existing conditions, for the attempt to create a new situation by law is futile. Indeed, in fascist syndicalism, laws and regulations have only been decided upon, when the actual circumstances furnished a certain basis for them.

The proposal of the law [of April 3, 1926], which could have been presented the day following fascism's accession to power, has been postponed for three years and a half, and not without reason, for it should not be only the manifestation of a theoretical idea or a high aspiration, but should also represent the fruit of an actual experience. It is not without reason that the law was not passed after the agreement of Palazzo Vidoni—a new proof that fascism is not inspired in its governmental acts merely by a system of doctrines and ideas, but moves always on a firm basis of reality.¹

¹ Speech of Alfredo Rocco in the Senate, March 11, 1926.

In this connection it should be remembered, however, that the meeting of Palazzo Vidoni took place on October 2, 1925, and that the draft of the Rocco Law was presented to the Fascist Grand Council on October 7, 1925, only five days later. Considering the careful elaboration of the law, it seems improbable that the project had not been officially talked over before the agreement between the employers and the fascist syndicates took place. It may hence be maintained, if not that the regulation really preceded the agreement, at least that it was an immediate outcome of it, and if it was only passed by the Senate on March 11, 1926, this was merely because time had been lost in administrative formalities.

In fact, it may be questioned whether fascism never goes beyond sanctioning existing conditions. The fascist laws usually come at a moment when they can be justified to a certain extent by the actual situation, but they are undoubtedly often intended to make that situation irreversible and to accentuate it, and indeed, the very fact of legal acknowledgment has that effect, though it falls short of universalizing the phenomenon. The gap which thereby arises between the actual situation and the legal picture of it, and the difficulties to which this gives rise, only prove the correctness of the contention of Rocco that "the attempt to create a new situation by law is futile." That both, the tendency to follow the actual conditions in legislation and that to precede them, exist in fascism, and that the leaders avail themselves alternatively of both policies, was acknowledged by Bottai, when he said: "Fascism does not invent, but follows and precedes, concludes and anticipates."¹

Although tending towards the corporate state, fascism is still in the syndicate phase, but even if the corporations do not yet exist, the establishment of the Ministry of Corpora-

¹ Speech of Giuseppe Bottai at the Senate, May 31, 1928.

tions is a gesture demonstrating the intention of fascism to develop in that direction. At present the establishment of a national council of corporations is being studied.

The entire development of fascist syndicalism shows that no rigid policy has been followed, although some leaders have had a definite program. Many experiments have caused Mussolini to pursue a zig-zag course. The tendency, however, has always remained the same. As early as September, 1922, Mussolini stated in the *Popolo d'Italia*: "Fascist syndicalism does not exclude the possibility that in a far-off tomorrow, producers' syndicates may be the cells of a new type of economy".¹

¹ Article of Mussolini in the *Popolo d'Italia*, September 2, 1922.

CHAPTER VI

ORGANIZATION OF THE LEGALLY RECOGNIZED ASSOCIATIONS

INDIVIDUALS exercising various professions are grouped into syndicates in the Italian state. A syndicate may be legally recognized whenever ten per cent of the workers engaged in a given kind of work are enrolled in the association, or, in the case of employers, when its members give work to at least ten per cent of the workers engaged in that industry. The figure of ten per cent may seem rather low, but it has been adopted in view of the slight organization of Italians in general and especially in southern Italy. Rocco was justified, therefore, in answering Senator Loria, when the law of April 3, 1926, was discussed in the Senate, that it was an entirely imaginary case to suppose that the remaining ninety per cent of the workers would unite into an organization which would not be recognized because it did not stand for fascist ideas. The laborers who today are organized in the fascist syndicates have not come from the politically indifferent class of workers. The latter group are as adverse to organization as ever. The wage-earners in the fascist organizations are in large part those who formerly belonged to syndicates of another political faith.

The local organizations are of no great importance, for functions of representation are only accorded to the provincial, regional, interprovincial or national syndicates created for any given branch of labor. These syndicates may obtain legal recognition by application to the Minister of Corporations. Together with the request, they must sub-

mit a report concerning their origin, the activities they have pursued since the time of their establishment, and a list of their officers and registered members, all of whom must be of unobjectionable conduct from the fascist point of view. They must present their constitution, describe the aims of the organization, state the location of the association's headquarters and the territory in which it operates, explain its relation to and connection with other organizations, and give precise information on financial and disciplinary matters, especially on the standards whereby the admission and expulsion of members is regulated. Whenever such information satisfies the competent minister and he does not object to recognition for political, economic, or moral reasons, legal recognition is granted by royal decree. Recognition is withheld when the associations are not formed exclusively of employers or employees, although they may aim at the moral and material protection of their members. In very serious cases the competent minister, in agreement with the Minister of the Interior, and after hearing the opinion of the Council of State, may revoke the legal recognition of a syndicate which must then cease to exist also as an extra-legal organization. A receiver is appointed (by the prefect in case of provincial organizations or by the Minister of Corporations in case of associations of higher grade) who is entrusted with the liquidation of its assets and the payment of its debts. The net capital remaining is turned over by royal decree to the next higher association, or, in case there is none, or should a higher grade association itself be concerned, the surplus is spent for the welfare and education of the members of another syndicate which represents the same group. Property, belonging to an association prior to its recognition, becomes part of its endowment, regardless of who was holding and administering it on behalf of the syndicate.

The legally recognized associations, representing before

the law all workers of the same group, may bind them by collective contracts, and possess the exclusive right to designate representatives to state or other public organizations, whether administrative, technical or political.

These organizations form the basis of the fascist syndicate state. They are in direct touch with the people through the general assemblies of the members, but not all those exercising a given art or profession are free to become members. Admission takes place upon the explicit declaration of the applicant, who must be at least 18 years of age and may be of either sex, that he accepts the standards and statutes of the syndicates. Although this requirement is perfectly logical and similar to the requirements in other countries of loyalty to the existing government as a prerequisite of membership in an organization, this provision acquires special significance in the case of the Italian legally recognized syndicates, since these are essentially fascist organizations and all workers of a dissenting political opinion may therefore be excluded. Even apart from this specific declaration of the applicant, the syndicate may refuse admission to any worker who has non-fascist, or at least non-national political ideas, or who belongs to a non-fascist labor organization. Once accepted, the member is obliged to furnish the organization with any information required which he may be able to give. The member may be suspended for a period not to exceed six months, and may be expelled for disciplinary, moral or political reasons. Only regularly enrolled members may participate in the activities of the association and the election of its officers.

Although admission to the legally recognized syndicates is restricted, in practice they do not represent organizations of pure fascist faith, but include dissenting elements which have sought admission because only the fascist syndicates enjoy the right of legal recognition and other privileges. The

assembly of members from which only decidedly radical elements are excluded, hence represents fairly adequately the attitude of the workers, especially on specific economic matters. But the convocation of workers in great numbers is avoided, for a spontaneous demonstration might be difficult to discipline. Therefore, the assembly of workers is to be called together by sections, "whenever the number of members, the local conditions or other circumstances require it."¹ The discipline of these regional assemblies is entrusted to a delegate of the syndicate, while a general assembly is presided over by the secretary of the organization. The law provides that the secretary, who is to be elected by the members in the assembly, must excel in technical skill and must be of good moral reputation, so that leadership is entrusted to the better workers. He is usually a person of fascist views, for he must be "of good political conduct from the national point of view,"² in order to have his election ratified by the superior confederation and approved by governmental decree. By the introduction of this provision the fascists hoped to replace the political organizers of the former labor associations by persons of fascist faith and discipline, and they have succeeded, as the general national congress of all syndicate representatives held in Rome in May, 1928, demonstrated. These labor representatives live in rather close contact with the local working population, and are conscious of its needs and wishes, so that the complaints and recommendations made by them on specific matters may be accepted as authentic indications of the existing labor situation.

In his syndicate duties the secretary is assisted by the directorate, a board of four members elected by the assembly.

¹ General statutes of fascist syndicates, article 11.

² Norms for the application of the law of April 3, 1926, *Royal Decree*, July 1, 1926, no. 1130, article 1.

To these is added an invalid laborer (of the group represented by the syndicate), who is designated by the National Association of War Invalids. This inclusion of an invalid in the directorate of every syndicate is the result of a "pact of solidarity", concluded by Rossoni in the name of the laboring class with the representative of the war-invalids, in which the syndicates pledged themselves to give preference to those workers who had been wounded in the late war. The above mentioned syndicates represent all the producers of the country. These local syndicates are united into provincial, interprovincial or national syndicates, which in turn form national federations. The latter represent purer bodies from the fascist point of view, for their directorates are elected by a council which is composed of the secretaries of the various lower grade associations, who already represent selected elements. Furthermore, the secretary of the federation is nominated by the president of the superior confederation and must be approved officially. The federation which unites the various sub-groups of labor into a general organization for any given industry, is entrusted with the coördination of their activities and the solution of any conflicts that may arise among them. It must engage in and encourage the study of special problems of production, and promote the creation and development of institutes for the professional, moral, or national education of the laborers. Further, it must ensure the application of the special labor laws, but can only conclude collective contracts for the branch associations when such power has been especially delegated to it by the higher organization, the confederation.

Confederations of employers and employees respectively are constituted for the various categories of production: industry, agriculture, commerce, banking, inland transportation, and maritime and aerial transportation, and a confederation is also established for the intellectual professions,

which had been united, with the manual workers' organizations into the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates under Rossoni. The confederations are the directing syndicate bodies in the fascist regime. The president is designated by the national congress which "is composed of the secretaries of first grade syndicates" or "of extraordinary commissioners", appointed by the Government,¹ but the election is not valid unless approved by ministerial decree. The president is assisted by the directorate, but in important cases he may concentrate all powers in his person by suspending the directing board. In its turn, the Government reserves to itself the ultimate control, through the right to take the administration of the confederation out of the hands of the president and entrust it to a special commissioner appointed for this purpose. Hence, should the general assembly engage in an undisciplined manifestation, and should the directing board and even the president of the highest association support such action, the Government has a means of controlling and disciplining the unregulated expressions of the producers. This, however, is an emergency measure. As a rule the activities of the confederation are limited to the general propagation of the principles of fascist syndicalism, and it is these confederations that supply the syndicate representation in Parliament, for the delegates are nominated by the national council. "Only the president of the confederation has the right to come into contact with the powers of the state, with the central hierarchies of the fascist party, with those international organizations recognized by the state, and with all the authorities, even in behalf of the adhering national organizations."²

The president of the confederation may revoke the nomi-

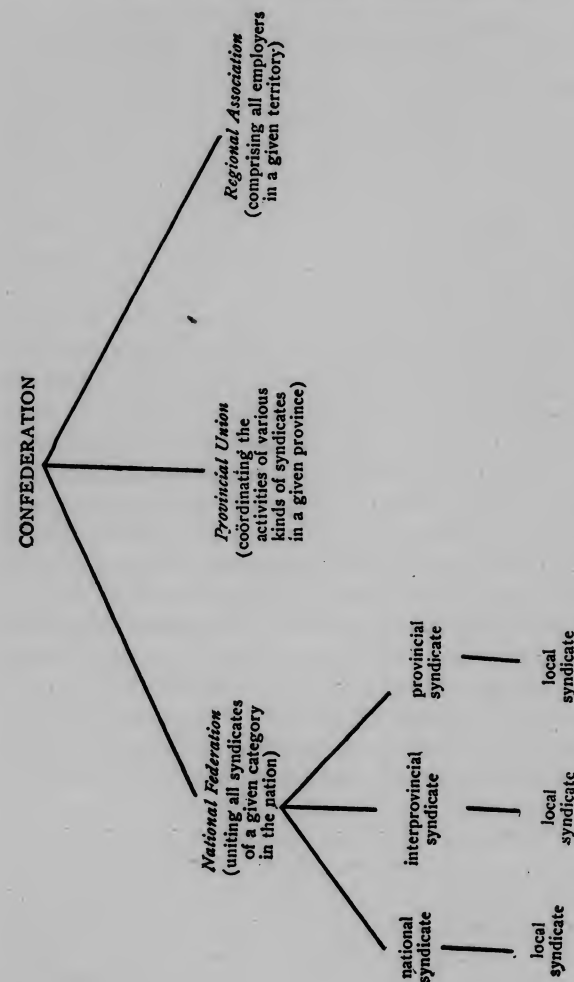
¹ Statutes of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, article 15.

² General statutes of the workers' confederations, article 9, quoted from the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, January 17, 1929.

nation of any secretary or other official of a branch association, and in agreement with the directorate he may even suspend an association for a period of six months, or decide upon the expulsion of an organization, whereby the latter loses the legal recognition conferred upon it.

Federations and confederations constitute higher grade associations which, as such, receive legal recognition and become personalities before the law. As a result, the lower grade syndicates affiliated with the federation are automatically recognized and acquire legal personality as do also any associated institutes. Recognition is granted to higher grade syndicates on conditions similar to those for lower grade syndicates. In addition the provincial federations, in their application for recognition, must submit a list of affiliated associations and welfare or educational institutes and authentic copies of the affiliation agreements and of the constitutions of the syndicates, together with a certificate from the provincial prefecture in which the association is located, testifying that the various associations are complying with the requirements of the law. National federations or confederations need only present a list of affiliated bodies, apart from the general requirements, all other information being compiled directly by the Minister of Corporations.

Whenever a non-recognized lower grade association applies for admission to a legally recognized higher grade association, recognition may be conferred upon the applicant and its institutes by a special royal decree issued upon the request of the higher grade association, approving the change in the list of affiliated associations. If admission to a higher grade association is refused to a lower grade body, or if such a body is excluded by a federation or confederation, appeal may be made as a measure of last resort to the Minister of Corporations. Whenever a national confederation comprises all categories of employers and employees in a



given branch of production, recognition of a federation or association not already affiliated with it is prohibited by law.

In its coördination and control the confederation is assisted by the provincial union of syndicates, to which the provincial and interprovincial syndicates of all branches of labor within the province belong, and which also includes all institutes established for the spiritual and material assistance of the workers. While a national federation is a superior organization for any kind of labor, the union is the provincial representative of the confederation. (See Chart.) As such it has the task of diffusing the principles of fascist syndicalism, and of drawing up collective contracts for the associations within its province, or at least of assisting the lower grade associations in their activities, whenever the right to conclude collective contracts has been conferred upon them. The union must also center its attention upon problems of production and of labor within the territory. It is directed by a secretary who is nominated by the president of the confederation and whose appointment must be confirmed by legal provision. He acts in agreement with a board of directors of four members elected by the provincial congress, which latter body includes the members of the directing boards and the secretaries of all syndicates within the province. A representative of the War Invalids' Association is also included. In case of a conflict between the national federation and the provincial union, the view of the federation must prevail.

Federations and confederations may include employers or employees, manual and non-manual. Not only can employers and employees never be united in the same association, but even in the case of syndicates comprising several groups of workers, each group must find separate personal representation. The same provision applies in case technicians and office employees are united in the same organization.

Technical and manual workers, even if employed in the same enterprise, cannot form part of the same association, and technical and administrative directors and other heads of enterprises as well as agents must also be organized in separate syndicates, directly subordinate to a higher grade association. Professional men and artists, when employed in an industrial, agricultural, commercial, or other undertaking, must form part of the employees' syndicate for the purposes of drawing collective labor contracts, but may in addition join a separate section with personal representation. Professional men and artists, whose work falls simultaneously and permanently into the realm of different occupational organizations, may become members in each appropriate association. Likewise, a person who is permanently both employer and employee, may join organizations of employers and employees, in each one of which he pays only a part of the regular contribution. By these regulations the rigidity of the syndicate system, which might impede the free development of individuals, is somewhat mitigated.

Interference by the federations and confederations in the enterprises of members of lower grade associations is prohibited. Under no circumstances may the syndicates of employers as such engage in commercial activities or interfere in private business without the consent of the interested persons, except when labor relations are concerned.

While collective contracts are concluded by the respective organizations, it is believed that questions of a special nature, coming up within the factory, which in socialist times were regulated by the workers' councils, should be discussed by the employers and a worker of the enterprise, appointed for that purpose by the syndicate. This has already been done in Brescia. As this book goes to press, we learn that the congress of industrial workers in Milan adopted a resolution, asking for the general introduction of such direct workers'

representatives in the factories. The employers violently opposed the measure, as can be recognized from the following statement in an industrial newspaper:

The question amounts practically to this: the worker, a technical element in the process of production, is and must be exclusively a worker in the factory. Whatever syndicate task in the factory might be entrusted to him would only divert him from his activity as a worker, which constitutes his specific and only task according to the terms of the contract.¹

In the early days of September Mussolini called an inter-syndicate committee meeting, at which the idea of direct workers' representatives in the factories was unanimously rejected. Since the very persons who had been the most prominent advocates of this measure joined the resolution to the contrary, it is generally believed that Mussolini's opinion decided the matter, and his answer is interpreted as illustrating his inclination to favor at present the demands of the capitalists.

This sketch of the syndicate system in Italy illustrates what the fascists proclaim as one of their fundamental convictions. The wishes of the public must be taken into account, and the people must be given the opportunity to participate in the determination of their fate by the election of their representatives, but the state, in virtue of its superior vision, must control the expressions of the popular will, and must guide the population in the election of its syndicate representatives, and, should they be unworthy of their mission, must reject them, so that control of the syndicates shall not fall into the hands of insincere agitators. The opponents of the fascist regime hold that this is a means of dominating the people, who are prevented by rigid control from expressing their free opinion. They cite in support of this con-

¹ *Informazione Industriale*, August, 1929.

tention the fact that the secretaries of the lower grade associations are usually not elected, but are nominated by a superior official, and that the persons so appointed frequently are not even workers. In explanation the fascists declare that this was necessary to distinguish sharply the present from the past, and that by and by free elections will come. However, it does not seem that, in the future, the syndicate representation of the workers will be entrusted to individuals emerging from the laboring class, but rather that it will be undertaken by persons who have received training in special schools created for that purpose. Labor leaders of both fascist and anti-fascist faith object that in that case the workers would not be treated in the same manner as the employers. While the latter may freely elect from their own members a representative who knows and comprehends intimately their conditions and their needs, the workers will be represented by an outsider who, no matter how good his intentions, will not be able to understand them completely. Furthermore the new statutes even provide that the national council which elects the president of the confederation, may be composed of special commissioners, appointed by the Government. By this provision all influence on the direction of their organization is potentially taken from the workers. A similar clause is not included in the statutes of the employers' confederations. Another inequality between employers and workers is pointed out: the number of employers is smaller than that of laborers. It is therefore easy for the former to discuss their syndicate policy at social or business meetings, in case the Government should prevent a regular assembly. Such contact is impossible for the large working group. Furthermore, since the assemblies of employers are usually less turbulent than those of the wage-earners, the Government will not object to them, but it is feared that it will suppress those of the

workers, or at least control and discipline them in such a manner that no genuine popular expression is possible.

Among other factors it may be a result of this situation, that the percentage of the employers enrolled in their representative associations is greater than that of the workers. That this has happened is shown by the following table:¹

TABLE III
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ENROLLED AS SYNDICATE MEMBERS IN 1929²

	Employers		Employees	
	Enrolled	Represented	Enrolled	Represented
Banks.....	8,251	10,167	22,690	55,480
Industry.....	71,459	120,820	1,300,000	2,530,920
Commerce.....	360,000	805,661	346,931	908,400
Agriculture.....	314,658	?	1,021,461	5,000,000
Land Transportation....	20,250	50,301	155,913	?
Maritime & Aerial Transp..	631	1,820	67,387	250,000
Professional Occupations..	..	..	66,124	102,822
Artisans.....	206,000	422,662	..	..
Total.....	981,249	1,411,430	2,980,515	8,867,022

The figure for the number of agricultural employers is lacking. Its inclusion might alter the result or even reverse it, for the number of agricultural proprietors in Italy is very great. In fact the official figures at the end of October,

¹ It should be remembered in this connection that all employers and employees of a given group are *represented* by the respective fascist syndicates, but that *membership* is not automatically extended to all. Only when complying with certain conditions, can a person become an *enrolled member* in a fascist syndicate.

² Figures given to the author by the Ministry of Corporations, February, 1929. It is realized that the figures do not add up correctly, but they were given in this form by the Ministry of Corporations.

1927, gave 2,750,040 agriculturalists as represented by the association. Inclusion of this figure in the above table would bring the total figure of represented employers to over four millions, and the greater organization would then be found on the side of the workers.

Comparison of the number of workers in industry and agriculture shows that fascist syndicalism is no longer a phenomenon of the rural masses. But fascist syndicalism originated among the agriculturalists of the North. As in the case of earlier political labor groups, the problem of organizing the South then presented itself. This has always proved difficult, not only because the mentality of the Southern differs from that of the Northern Italian, but also because there is a wide difference of opinion as to how the so-called problem of the *Mezzogiorno* should be solved. It has been claimed by the representatives of the South that the industrialization of the North took place at the expense of the country districts and that Italy's entire economic and political policy has been directed with regard to the needs of the North only. Thus high protective tariffs have been placed on manufactured goods, so as to assist the young manufacturing industries, but for the agricultural South this was disadvantageous, not only because of the resulting higher prices, but also because the North, by its industrialization, forced the South to remain a source of raw materials. The gap between the two parts of Italy has, therefore, widened. Against this contention, Northern politicians advance the argument that agriculture is most flourishing and most modernized in highly developed industrial countries and that the real difficulty of the South arises from the backwardness of its inhabitants.

Fascism inherited this problem, and the leaders have tried to solve it by encouraging all tendencies that aim at a modernization of the South and at making living conditions there

more healthful. Thus the Government has improved the railroad service, built aqueducts and, above all, is striving, by its policy of land reclamation, to free wide stretches of land from malaria. Nevertheless, the Southerners still believe that they are neglected in comparison to the North and it may hence be maintained that the problem of the *Mezzogiorno* still exists, for it persists in the minds of the people.

It would, however, be erroneous to conclude from this contrast between the two parts of the country that Northern Italy is a purely industrial district. On the contrary, some of the most notable industrial centers are situated in important agricultural provinces, as is the case with Milan. The two provinces producing the best grain in Italy, Cremona and Brescia, are both in the North. But although over one half of the Italian population is engaged in agriculture, there is a marked difference in the products. In the South olives, vegetables and fruits are raised, often on large estates, while grain is cultivated in the northern part of the country, mostly by small land-owners. Vineyards, however, are to be found all over Italy. More temperate than the South, although very mild, is the climate in the Valley of the Po, permitting the cultivation of rice in that district. In view of the fact that Italy holds the third place in the world as an exporter of rice, it can easily be perceived how important a part rice cultivation plays in Italian economic life. Every year great numbers of workers migrate to the Valley of the Po from the neighboring provinces at the time of the harvest. It is said that among those workers, especially the female ones, the Catholics still have a notable influence. Not because they keep up a syndicate activity, but because they assist the Government in its social welfare work among the rice-workers, have they maintained a close contact with the laboring population.

Notwithstanding the wide agricultural development of the

North, it is the district where industry has concentrated, and whenever industries have grown up in any other part of Italy, it has been due almost exclusively to natural conditions. This holds true for sulphur and marble, for instance. The silk industry has been chiefly developed in the North. Apart from the iron mines on Elba, Italy is almost completely devoid of iron, coal and oil, and she therefore has paid special attention to those industries which demand highly skilled labor. Thus metal works, and hence the automobile industry, have developed, as well as the chemical and paper industries.

Undoubtedly foremost in importance is the metal industry, in which the workers for years have belonged to the socialist syndicates. The textile industry, on the other hand, in which women workers are chiefly employed, was the stronghold of the Catholic labor organizations. Much of Italian industry is still done on a small scale. There is a widespread handicraft industry. Fishing is an important means of income for the people on the coast, and it has only in exceptional cases been organized on a larger scale. The entire hotel business is still on a small scale. It can easily be understood that this characteristic of the labor situation renders the economic organization and representation of the people, as the fascists strive to accomplish it, very difficult. The following table shows the way the workers have been classified.

The organization of the industrial laborers who have been accustomed to it for a long time, was not especially difficult after the exclusive privilege of legal recognition was granted to the fascist associations. The organization of office workers in industrial enterprises, however, was hampered by prejudices, especially by the refusal of the employers to enter into collective contracts with them, a difficulty which was overcome only through the intervention of the Fascist Grand Council.

TABLE IV
ORGANIZATION OF NATIONAL CONFEDERATIONS OF FASCIST SYNDICATES FOR DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates for Industry	N. C. of F. S. for Agriculture	N. C. of F. S. for Commerce	N. C. of F. S. for Banking Employees	N. C. of F. S. for Land Transportation and Internal Navigation	N. Fascist C. of the Sea and Air Workers	N. C. of Professionals and Artists
National Federation of Fascist Syndicates of the Press	N. F. of F. S. for Agricultural Technicians	N. F. of F. S. of Agents, Representatives and Salesmen	I. National Federations of Category	N. F. of F. S. in Transport and Communication (trains, tramways, lake and river transportation)	I. Sea Workers	National and Provincial Syndicates of lawyers and legal advisers
N. F. of F. S. in the Paper Industry	N. F. of F. S. of Office Employees in Agricultural and Forest Enterprises	N. F. of F. S. of Office Employees in Commercial Enterprises	1) ordinary credit		1) commanders and executives	1) engineers
N. F. of F. S. in the Chemical Industry	N. F. of F. S. of Small Direct Cultivators	N. F. of F. S. in Insurance	2) labor banks	N. F. of F. S. of Office Employees in Transportation Enterprises	2) physicians	2) doctors in economic and commercial science
N. F. of F. S. in the Wood Industry	N. F. of F. S. of Farmers and Tenants (<i>Mesadri</i>)	N. F. of F. S. of Hotel Trade Enterprises	3) rural banks	N. F. of F. S. in Electrical Communication Enterprises (telephone, radio, telegraph, cable)	3) officers	3) land surveyors
N. F. of F. S. in the Building Industry	N. F. of F. S. of Salaried and Day Workers	N. F. of F. S. of Guides, Janitors, Employees in Public Baths, etc.	4) private banks and financial institutes		4) office workers	4) notaries
N. F. of F. S. in the Metal Industry			II. Interprovincial Syndicates		5) non-commissioned officers and ranks	5) architects
N. F. of F. S. in the Textile Industry					6) Air Workers	6) chemists
					7) pilots	7) geometers
					8) pilots	8) geometers

N. F. of F. S. in the Glass and Ceramic Industries	N. F. of F. S. of Forest Workers	N. F. of F. S. of Tax Employees and Exchange Agents	N. F. of F. S. of Harbor Workers	9) experts
N. F. of F. S. in the Fishing Industry	N. F. of F. S. of Shepherds	N. F. of F. S. of Pushcart Men and Hucksters	N. F. of F. S. of Drivers, Porters, Guards, etc.	10) inventors
N. F. of F. S. in Nutrition			N. F. of F. S. of Automobile Drivers	11) writers
N. F. of F. S. in the Mining Industries				12) artists
N. F. of F. S. in the Artistic Industries				13) musicians
N. F. of F. S. in Theatres and Moving Pictures				14) sanitary organization (physicians, pharmacists, etc.)
N. F. of F. S. in the Clothing Industry				15) school organization (private school teachers)
N. F. of F. S. in Gas, Electricity and Water				

At present industrial laborers and office workers are united in the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Industry, the president of which is Arnaldo Fioretti. The confederation is made up of fifteen national federations, which include thirty-five national syndicates, sixty groups of interprovincial syndicates, and forty-two groups of provincial syndicates, only seven of the latter with organizations in every province. In each province a provincial union coordinates the activities of the various syndicates.

The agricultural workers are represented by the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Agriculture, which has a provincial union in every province and is under the presidency of Luigi Razza. The seven national federations represent the technicians, office employees in agricultural and forest enterprises, the small direct cultivators, the farmers and tenants (*mezzadri*), the salaried and day laborers, the workers engaged in forest enterprises and the shepherds. There are forty-three interprovincial agricultural syndicates and four groups of provincial syndicates in every province. Organization among agricultural laborers has been extended also to the south of Italy, as the syndicates have been adapted to the different local conditions. Even the shepherds, never grouped into a common association before, have been organized. In agriculture the struggle between the employers and the workers is still very extensive. The law of April 3, 1926, and the royal decree of July 1, 1926, had provided that the standards to be set up in leases to farmers and tenants were not to be regarded in the same manner as collective contracts, a provision which was later changed upon the ruling of the Fascist Grand Council.

Where collective contracts exist, they are frequently not respected. Provisions for the assistance of workers which are laid down in the charter of labor, in particular, are not applied, and the workers refrain from denouncing any in-

fractions because they fear to lose their jobs. In view of the lack of penalties, which have only come into existence recently, even the syndicates have been impotent. It sometimes happens that the prefects intervene to enforce the application of a measure, but in some sections the agricultural laborer is still at the absolute mercy of his employer. The Confederation of Agriculture is pursuing an active campaign to mitigate the situation. It was the first to propose recourse to the labor court in the determination of the standards for a collective contract, and of its eighty-eight agreements, ten have been concluded only through intervention by the Ministry of Corporations.

Organization of the employees in commercial enterprises has been especially difficult, as often only two or three employees work in an establishment. Nevertheless, the enrolled members have increased from 58,950 on December 31, 1926, to 346,391 on December 31, 1928. Seven national federations, composed of about one hundred and seven interprovincial and five provincial syndicates have been organized as part of the National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Commerce which is presided over by De Marsanich. In every province a union has been formed. It is quite natural for most of the syndicates to be interprovincial for the work of the employees in commercial enterprises often exceeds the boundaries of a province. The same is true of the employees in banks. The National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Banking Employees, with Nazzarini Mezzetti as president, has no dependent provincial unions. Their functions are fulfilled by the national federations and by the fifteen interprovincial syndicates, which latter adhere directly to the Confederation without the intermediary of national federations. The banking employees largely opposed organization. Their collective contracts are rather national or regional, as is natural for them.

The National Confederation of Fascist Syndicates of Land Transportation and Internal Navigation, with Livio Ciardi as president, is composed of six national federations with twenty-three interprovincial and fourteen provincial syndicates. For evident reasons no provincial unions have been created.

The National Fascist Confederation of Sea and Air Workers, under the presidency of Igino Magrini, has at present a standing equal to that of the other confederations, but when the latter were united as federations into the General Confederation under the leadership of Rossoni, the seamen's association constituted an autonomous federation under a special commissioner, who was the same Igino Magrini. This separate organization was justified in view of the entirely different traditions, problems, needs and aspirations of those living chiefly at sea, although the increasingly rapid transportation and consequently the short time sailors spend at sea without reaching land is lessening the differences. The Confederation includes all those employed in maritime and aerial enterprises, from the commanders, executives of the companies, and aerial pilots to the simple sailors.

In view of the fact that the present Italian maritime law is based on conditions existing a century ago, when the transatlantic liners had not yet appeared, and shipping enterprises were in the hands of private individuals and families instead of under the control of large share-holding companies as they are today, the Confederation is striving to obtain acceptance of a new conception of maritime law, which would more closely correspond to actual conditions. It would then be possible to conclude contracts for sailors which would exceed the period of a single voyage, and to assure, if not regularity of employment, at least greater certainty. On the basis of long-period collective contracts the sailors would also enjoy the privileges accorded to land laborers, such as the annual

period of paid vacations, the discharge compensation proportional to the years of service, the possibility of advancement and old-age pensions, all of which benefits the sailor cannot claim if he is engaged only for single trips, perhaps on different ships even when for the same company. The Confederation hopes that hand in hand with this change in maritime law will go a change in the penal code, which accords different treatment to workers at sea than to those on land. Although recognizing the necessity of a greater discipline at sea, the Confederation demands, in conformity with the resolutions frequently taken by international congresses, that the special treatment of the seamen should be limited to cases where the public interest is concerned. It also demands that the workers at sea and the employers should be put on the same footing as to the right of terminating the contract concluded between them. This by no means signifies that the Confederation favors the simple extension of the common law of land workers to the sailors, for it is recognized that life at sea has different exigencies, and that an absolute hierarchical discipline must be maintained on board ship with the authority of the captain undisputed, but it is asked that the workers at sea should not be subject to unfair treatment.

At present the compilation of a new maritime code is being worked out in Italy, and the Confederation, whose president is a member of the commission for the study of the new code, is striving to have it drawn up in such a manner that it will provide for obligatory collective contracts, the representation of seamen by their syndicate organization, and the establishment of employment offices. From 1920 on, employment offices for sailors have operated in Italy, but only imperfectly, since many sailors were engaged independently and since the placement of officers was not included among the functions of the offices. However, it is to be expected

that the situation will change in the near future. The new maritime law should be followed by a perfected maritime jurisdiction, and the Confederation favors the idea that this jurisdiction should be entrusted to the commanders of the ports, as the latter are well acquainted with all maritime questions. The consideration that the status of the workers at sea is a special one, has also led the Government to entrust to the commander of the maritime department the duties which would otherwise be those of the officials of the corporations.

While the Confederation favors the incorporation of a new conception of maritime law into the code, it also strives to carry its ideas into practice by instituting collective contracts. Such contracts vary for the officers, the sailors, and other employees in maritime enterprises. At present the agreements concluded are not exactly like other collective contracts, for they acquire legal force only when officially issued by the competent minister. But the decision upon the terms of the contract is left to the interested parties, and the authority of the ministry does not always bring about a settlement, as a case which has been brought before the labor court proves.

The Seamen's Confederation wishes to have all the guarantees given the workers by the charter of labor included in the collective contracts. It especially favors provisions that after the trial period, during which no contract exists, a laborer shall be engaged for a definite period, fixed in the collective contract, that he can only be discharged for a just reason, unless given a fair indemnity and that the contract can only be abrogated after previous notification. Although these principles are actually incorporated into the collective contracts, the interpretation of a just reason for discharge is not uniform. The Seamen's Confederation objects to the opinion of the employers that the temporary

dismantling of a ship for repairs or for lack of traffic, or the arrival of the ship in the Italian home port constitute justifiable reasons for discharge.

In the aeronautic field the Confederation has found less difficulty in introducing collective contracts. The creation of a special code, similar to the new maritime code under consideration, is advocated. Undoubtedly the tasks that have confronted the National Fascist Confederation of Sea and Air Workers have been difficult, but as they have been very energetically attacked, it is to be hoped that the Confederation will succeed in bettering the situation of the workers at sea. It should, however, be mentioned that it is able to build on a firm basis because Captain Giuletti had already accustomed the sailors to disciplined organization.

While the seamen, because of their special status, were grouped into an autonomous organization, the intellectuals were united with the manual laborers in the General Confederation under the leadership of Rossoni. This classification has been frequently criticized on the ground that, although there are brain workers and manual workers, the first-named form a distinct class with aspirations and problems different from those of all others, and hence should have separate representation. But Rossoni objected that since the intellectuals are the greatest moral force of the workmen's association, if they were drawn into the realm of the integral syndicate state, where they could freely use their mental training and technical ability, they would assist the state in the solution of practical and theoretical problems, and would especially help to guide the group socially weakest, to wit, the wage-earners. The organized intellectuals themselves seemed to be of that opinion, for they frequently voted in favor of remaining in the same organization with the manual laborers. As early as 1922, they stated in their program:

The fascist intellectual workers intend to offer to the proletarians the benefit of their culture, of their education, of their executive ability, and in return require from them discipline, love for work and spontaneous coöperation with all forces intended to raise them morally and intellectually. The intellectual workers wish to act as brothers towards anyone who, by working, collaborates in the socio-economic resurrection of the nation.

The controversy has lost its importance since it has been established in December, 1928, that the two general confederations, grouping all employers and all employees respectively, were not to exist. At present the National Confederation of Professionals and Artists constitutes an autonomous organization. Still those intellectuals who in business have a standing similar to that of executives, would prefer to be incorporated, as are the managers, in the employers' Confederation of Industry.

The problem of the intellectuals is among the most serious that confronts fascism. The awakening of the consciousness of the proletariat caused the relation of the employers to the wage-earners to dominate political thought of the last century almost to the exclusion of serious attention to all other classes. Furthermore, Marxism, besides stigmatizing the capitalist as an exploiter of the worker, either ridicules the intellectual as a narrow-minded and petty bourgeois, or simply overlooks his existence. Fascism, in its attempt to encompass all classes in the state and to assign to each that position which enables it to contribute most to the national wellbeing, not only rejects the opinion of Karl Marx, but also frowns upon the practice of the United States, where intellectuals frequently, temporarily or otherwise, have recourse to manual labor to earn their living.

Being aware that there might be just as much suffering among intellectuals because of unemployment, illness or other

misfortune, as among the wage-earners, although it is not so evident, and in view of the fact that the fascist syndicate state is to be based on occupational groups, an attempt was made to give security and a rightful place in the state to intellectuals as well as to other workers when Edmondo Rossoni provided the opportunity for the formation of a Corporation of Intellectuals in the Confederation of Corporations.

In February, 1920, the Italian Confederation of Intellectual Workers was organized. It had among its aims the assistance of members in cases of illness, unemployment or other difficulties, and the support of old, disabled members or of their widows and orphans, but the attempt failed because of the opposition of the intellectual workers to organization; a phenomenon, which is not only displeasing to Italians in general, but was considered as unworthy of the brain worker. But the reproach, that there existed "a total absence of the spirit of solidarity, an aversion to create a consciousness with regard to their own future, a non-recognition of their historical function and of the ethical mission assigned to them by the nature of things", does not seem justified.¹ It is merely that the intellectuals are rendered spiritually more independent by the very nature of their work.

Nevertheless, Dino Grandi succeeded in forming, in 1922, the first important syndicate of intellectuals in Rome. Direction of the movement soon passed to Giacomo di Giacomo, and Arnaldo Fioretti was entrusted with the leadership of the hygiene-medical section. In 1923, lawyers and legal advisers, engineers, doctors in economic and commercial science, land surveyors, authors and writers, notaries, archi-

¹ Giacomo di Giacomo, "L'Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Intellettuali," published in the volume *La Civiltà Fascista*, p. 419 (Unione Tipografica Editrice Torinese).

sects, chemists, mathematicians, experts and even inventors were organized. The journalists were included in the Corporation of the Press. The first important congress of the organized intellectuals was held in February, 1925, in Florence. In October, 1925, the first national congress took place in Genoa. On June 27, 1926, two thousand delegates declared that they wished to remain united with the manual workers. In 1928, about one hundred thousand intellectuals were enrolled in the national syndicates of the above mentioned professions and in those for artists and musicians; physicians, pharmacists, and other medical personnel were grouped in the medical organization, and private teachers in that of the school. Twenty national syndicates and about five hundred provincial ones exist. The Corporation of the Press has given way to the Syndicate of Journalists.

The fascists prohibit, even as extra-legal associations, organizations of professors of secondary and higher institutions, since professors must take an oath of allegiance to the state in the same manner as the officers of the army. Associations organized for the protection of the professional and educational interests of students in institutions of any grade are also prohibited, these interests being defended by the state itself. Violation of these regulations leads to dismissal or exclusion from all educational institutions in the country.

Having thus been incorporated into the integral syndicate state, rights and duties assigned to the other associations devolve also upon the syndicates of professional men, including the negotiation of collective contracts. Various advantages for the organized professional men have resulted. For example, the enrolled journalists are accorded the exclusive right to exercise their profession:

In accordance with Article One of the royal decree of February 20, 1928, the journalistic profession can only be exercised by

persons enrolled in the professional register. The keeping of the register and the discipline of the enrolled persons is entrusted to a committee of five members who themselves are enrolled in and adhere to the syndicate and are chosen by the Minister of Justice with the consent of the Ministers of the Interior and of Corporations, from the journalists designated by the competent syndicate association.¹

This exclusive privilege is not so much the result of the syndicate action of the association of journalists as it is an offshoot of the policy of the control of the press, for "the standards which have been followed in the enrollment are set with the idea of making journalism a profession reserved to worthy and capable persons, so as to make the syndicate a subtle political instrument at the orders of the Duce and the party".² The journalists have been able to obtain the stipulation of a minimum salary for their services.

Otherwise the results are not very notable. The chemists have concluded an agreement with their employers according to which, in those enterprises where a certain amount of chemical knowledge is required, only regularly graduated chemists can be employed. The actors and artists have been able to restrict exploitation by the managers somewhat, and authors have gained a stronger position in their relations with publishers. The employers are obliged to accept and compensate new engineers and engineers doing practical work while still students, although they have no experience, so as to guarantee to them the opportunity of employment in their profession. But these regulations are of minor importance in view of the extremely difficult position of the intellectuals in Italy. In August, 1928, three thousand en-

¹ Regulation concerning the journalists, April, 1928.

² Report of the Deputy Amicucci to the assembly of journalist organizations of which he is president, March 10, 1928. Quoted from *L'Operaio Italiano*, Paris, June 8, 1929.

gineers out of fifteen thousand were unemployed (according to the figures of their association), or twenty per cent of the total number, and some of those who were employed had received for years the small remuneration of from eight hundred to one thousand lire monthly, while young engineers worked for an indefinite period on the initial sum of from five hundred to six hundred lire a month.¹

Although the condition of the engineers is perhaps the most desperate, the other intellectual professions are also struggling with grave difficulties. The chemists have a hard time finding employment, and the journalists, although their number is restricted by the above-cited regulation, have one hundred and thirty unemployed among 1,664 enrolled members, that is, almost ten per cent of the total.

Of course, the introduction of collective contracts is not the only task of the syndicate associations, and the resolutions adopted at various congresses show how very necessary it is to provide assistance for the intellectuals and artists and their families. Several attempts have been made to apply the regulations of the charter of labor on illness and unemployment; special funds for the benefit of disabled and aged intellectuals are proposed and the need to take proper care of their children and to give them an adequate education is recognized. All these plans are but the beginning, and are not easy to realize, because of the financial distress of the Italian middle classes, and because it is certainly true that the syndicates of intellectuals include only a minority among intellectuals and artists. Even those adhere rather because they want to give proof of their fascist faith than because they believe in the possibility of the syndicate organization of intellectuals. Nor do the syndicates include the best elements, since as G. Bottai stated: "The sympathies of all

¹ *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, August 24 and 30, 1928.

those who in the academic field still occupy the first places, are neutral or opposed to us."¹

This is due to several causes. While it is relatively easy to organize the engineers, chemists and other intellectuals employed in large enterprises, and while a collective contract can be made for those groups as easily as for manual workers, physicians, lawyers and other independent professional men who are in especially marked competition with one another, only have an interest in uniting into syndicate associations for social welfare benefits and in order to agree on a certain minimum sum which they will charge for their professional services. But the organization of musicians, authors and, in particular, painters and sculptors, is well nigh impossible. Their individualism is their strong point and the contacts between them can only be of a social and spiritual order. The creation of funds for mutual assistance in case of old age and of accidental disability is difficult, because the earnings of artists are irregular, and they can hardly engage themselves to pay a definite sum at a definite time. Collective contracts are impossible, because payment depends solely on the individual value of the work as judged by the person giving the order. Hence it is improbable that artists will ever be united into a syndicate which could form the basis for the representation of their class. This difficulty is clearly recognized by Mussolini, who says that the fascist party or the state must provide for adequate representation of this element of the population, and must see to it that their interests are not neglected.

However, there is another and a very serious reason why the best of the artists remain outside of the fascist professional associations. The charter of labor states that "the representatives of those who exercise a liberal profession or

Giuseppe Bottai, in addressing the congress of the syndicates of lawyers and notaries, October 2, 1927.

an art, assist in the guardianship of the interests of art, science and letters, in the perfection of production and in the attainment of the moral aims of the corporate system."¹ Di Giacomo, the president of the National Fascist Confederation of Intellectuals, has declared:

Even among the syndicates of artists, we have carried beams of light where before we reeled in darkness and in doubt, intending and wishing that art, the expression of the spirit of a time, should be conceived sanely and in an Italian manner, with integrity and nobility, i. e., reflecting an aspect of the revolution which has been brought out in order to impress upon the nation the potent rhythm of a period of high activity. And of the journalists and writers we have requested that they engage in what may be called "spiritual imperialism", in the theater, the book, the newspaper and by means of lectures.²

While it is indeed true that the spirit of an era finds its expression in art, yet to demand this expression specifically from the artists means to limit their spiritual liberty and independence. The artist, if he possesses the vision of a genius, will understand and express the spirit of the time in a way that will be far above and beyond the conception of the majority of the people. Furthermore, he may precede his time and foreshadow the future, and to restrict him to the present means to limit him in the exercise of one of his noblest functions. Nor can the artists be confined within the boundaries of the nation, for the spirit of an era dominates the world, and those foremost artists who are able to grasp and render the fundamental elements and conceptions of any period, besides being citizens of one nation, belong to the world. It is justifiable to advocate that Italian art shall not imitate foreign examples, but in any case imitation

¹ *Charter of Labor*, article 8.

² Di Giacomo, *Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Intellettuali*, p. 420.

will only be practiced by minor figures. The strong personalities among the artists will be inspired by the great artists of every nationality. They may not agree with the momentary expression of the spirit of the epoch in their own country; they may not regard it as fundamental. The best artists will always rebel when they see the highest expressions of mankind's thoughts and capacities drawn into the service of a particular conception, a particular nation and perhaps a particular political party. Their task transcends (far transcends, if it is conceived in its highest sense) any political, national or temporal boundaries. It must not be requested of the creative intellectuals that they accept the dominant political thought, for their strength lies in the independence of their judgment, even though the latter may not necessarily be correct. They should not be "... put ... into the service of the state in the economic and moral reorganization of the nation."¹ The restriction to particular objects of the free expression of art may lead to the degradation of art.

The syndicate associations of artists in Italy control the biennial exhibition in Venice and the quaternial exhibition in Rome. In the acceptance of pictures for display no distinction is made as to the school to which the painter belongs. He may be a futurist, a cubist, or may belong to any other contemporary group, or work in the old style, but, according to the president of the Confederation of Intellectuals and Artists, he must not oppose the spirit of the time as the fascists see it; he must not go back to draw his inspirations and strength out of the work of artists long dead, because they lived in a different atmosphere; he must follow principles and a conception of art that are a result of the

¹ Di Giacomo, *L'Organizzazione dei Lavoratori Intellettuali*, p. 422.

modern Italian mentality; he must engage in "spiritual imperialism."

This limitation is serious. It is also imposed upon writers, who also are thereby hindered from transcending their own time, and from pointing towards the future and preparing the way for it. Any art thus limited in space and time may excel in a momentary task, but must in the end become stationary and degraded.

The same is true of science. The university professors are no longer free to express their views on any scientific subject that has a direct or indirect connection with fascism. While they formerly were engaged for life, the "law on the dismissal of state employees", which was presented to Parliament as early as May 28, 1925, gives the Government the right to dismiss any professors, "who place themselves in a position of incompatibility with the general political tendencies of the Government by manifestations in or outside of office". The fascist students, who are united into the so-called "fascist university groups" are required to report to their organization any professor who directly or indirectly advances any criticism against the regime or any particular aspect of it. By means of this students' control the fascists hope to keep close watch on all professors suspected of anti-fascist sentiments, for "it is necessary to devote our attention to those who teach, because it is that class which is still permeated by the remnants of a mentality foreign to our time".¹

However, the attempt to eliminate noted scientists because of their criticism of the Governmental policies aroused such indignation in Italy and abroad, that the fascists now proceed rather cautiously. So far, they exercise direct control only over the privat docents and the assisting teaching staff

¹ *Il Popolo d'Italia*, February 24, 1929.

of the universities, as the following circular by Augusto Turati shows:

In these days I assume, in my quality as secretary of the party, the direct organization of the privat docents, assistants and instructors . . . with the definite intention of giving them a solid and harmonious organization, according to the principles and necessities of fascism. The university groups of assistants and professors (privat docents) will have a double field of activity, in the university and in the federations: in the university they will take care of the political organization and will give the moral and professional assistance to single members and the university privat docents will carry the contribution of their precious knowledge into the fascist federations.¹

These provisions naturally hamper scientific investigation of special problems in many fields, such as economics, social and political science, law, history, philosophy and possibly even biology. Nor can the results of scholarly research be submitted to the public by means of the written word whenever an unfavorable opinion is expressed on any subject relating to the policies of fascism. On January 29, 1929, a circular was issued by the secretary of the party on the "political publications edited without censorship". It said in part:

From now on the publishing houses are invited to submit the proofs of all works which have a political character or contents, to the fascist federations, in order to permit a close censorship. In cases of doubt, uncertainty or controversy, the federations must transmit the proofs to the press office of the national fascist party whose decision shall be final. In the same manner, a copy of the volumes, pamphlets or books of recent publication

¹ Circular of A. Turati to the secretaries of the federations in provinces with universities or other higher grade institutions, to the directors of such institutions and to the "fascist university groups", published by the newspapers on February 20, 1929.

which may be of interest in connection with their diffusion in Italy or abroad, must be submitted.

If the fascists do not change their policies with regard to the intellectuals and artists, it will be quite impossible for Italian art and science to develop. The intolerant attitude of fascism towards the intellectuals, which results in keeping the best of them out of the syndicates, bars the way to the future spiritual greatness of Italy, which is proclaimed as the aim of all the fascist policies. The fascists, in attempting to discipline the middle classes intellectually, defeat their own purpose of creating a new civilization. It is debatable whether the masses of the people, intellectually less well trained and perhaps succumbing more easily to the agitation of politicians, should not be guided and disciplined by the state, but certainly the intellectuals should be allowed to express their opinions and conceptions freely, if they do so properly. Otherwise the syndicate state will lose many of its best and most prominent elements, which might contribute to its greatness.

To the six confederations of manual workers and employees, six confederations of employers correspond: The Confederations of Industry, of Agriculturalists, of Commerce, of Banking, of Inland Transportation and of Maritime and Aerial Transportation. The syndicate organization has adapted itself to various needs and conditions.

In the cases of industry, commerce and especially of land and inland water transportation, it has been deemed expedient to institute not only associations of the owners of specific enterprises, and to unite them into national federations, but to create regional associations, comprising all employers in the district, their common bond being the local problems. Commercial societies, possessing legal person-

ality by virtue of legal recognition, whose officers conform with the requirements for the directors of recognized associations, may belong to or affiliate with syndicate associations. Federations are formed in accordance with the difficulties confronting the shipowners, differing for freight and passenger service, and varying according to the sea in which their ships navigate. The Confederation of Banks is divided into sections according to the aims and the tasks of its members, these being dissimilar for stock-exchange brokers, rural banks and the major city banks. Three thousand enterprises are grouped into the banking confederation, with 43,000 members.

The National Confederation of Industry includes industrialists in small- and large-scale undertakings. They are separately grouped as their needs differ, since it might otherwise easily occur that the owners of large enterprises would take measures absolutely ruinous to the small-scale industries. A permanent national committee has been created to study the problems of small-scale industry. The directors of industrial enterprises, who, in the case of shareholding companies, represent the employer, are grouped into an association which belongs to the Confederation of Industry. The fact that employers and managers are united in the same confederation does not exclude the possibility of instituting collective contracts for their lower grade associations, subject to approval by the superior confederation.

There are, however, cases in industry in which it is difficult to decide whether a person should be regarded as an employer or as a worker. It has been decided that the Confederation of Artisans—which has many members, especially in the south of Italy—is to be incorporated in the Confederation of Industry. Likewise the industrial coöperative enterprises which, according to the law of April 3, 1926, may affiliate with the organizations of employers or employees, the

choice depending on the methods and the nature of their work, have joined the National Confederation of Industry. The artisans, the association of directors, the coöperatives and the permanent committee on behalf of small-scale enterprises, are represented by three members each in the general assembly formed of the presidents of all branch associations. The general assembly elects the president and the directing board of the Confederation. The individuals directing the Confederation receive no remuneration for their services. The statutes of the Confederation permit the creation of local unions for districts of an especially marked industrial development, while the unions are interprovincial whenever the territory is only slightly industrialized.

In July, 1928, the Confederation held its first annual congress, in which 6,000 industrialists participated: 2,500 from the north, 1,800 from the center and 1,700 from the south of Italy. At that time forty-nine national federations and ninety-six territorial syndicates, representing 66,557 enterprises with 1,750,000 members were included in the confederation. This corresponds to sixty-seven per cent of the industries in Italy and to eighty-five per cent of the workers employed in industry. To these are added 355,000 artisans.

It is an open secret that many of the industrialists included in the Confederation, do not hold fascist convictions and ideas, although they do not oppose the Government and certainly are in favor of some of its policies, such, for instance, as the outlawry of strikes. Other industrialists have tended to interpret the elimination of the class struggle which fascism advocates as a simple surrender to them of the right to establish, freely and uncontrolled, the conditions for their employees. That they do not always coöperate with the workers' syndicates in a spirit of solidarity became evident at the third national congress of fascist syndicates on May 6, 1928, which requested that the provincial and local

industrial associations should be directed by fascists, as are the laborers' organizations, so as to render understanding easier. At the same congress the fact that the industrialists sometimes discharge the workers who act as representatives of their group within the factory, was cited as an example of the intolerant spirit of the employers. Nevertheless, an ultimate understanding has always been possible, for in no case has the decision of the labor court been invoked by the industrial employers. The differences between employers and workers are almost exclusively on an economic basis; the increasing support of the *dopolavoro* movement by a great number of firms shows that they are in favor of raising the physical, moral and spiritual level of the working classes.

In agriculture it is more difficult to assist the workers in this development. Nevertheless, the *Dopolavoro* has also penetrated into agricultural districts. The fascist movement began among the agricultural population, and today the Confederation of Agriculturalists continues to be a strong supporter of fascism. The Confederation is among the most active of the organizations. The desire to stimulate agricultural production has led to the establishment of special economic sections at the provincial federations, which draw together all agriculturalists who specialize in a particular agricultural activity, such as the cultivation of agricultural products for use in industry, or the variation of agricultural products. The provincial organizations also give direct technical assistance to individual agriculturalists. Almost all collective contracts concluded by the agricultural organizations, at least in the North, provide for the creation of a commission composed of employers and workers and under the chairmanship of a person decided upon by both participants in common, which is to settle any disagreements which may present themselves in the interpretation of the contracts. The commission must attempt conciliation before the case is brought before the Ministry of Corporations.

The Confederation is composed of the provincial syndicates of agriculturalists who are not direct cultivators, and of those large landed proprietors who lease their lands.¹ Just as in industry, the agricultural coöperatives, grouped into national confederations, belong to the Confederation of Agriculturalists, for in point of fact the coöperatives may be regarded as employers, giving work to the members, who have united in order to be in a position to buy machines and for other benefits to production. This at any rate is the interpretation of the Confederation of Agriculturalists. The coöperatives also belong to the National Institute of Coöperatives, which is not a syndicate organization, but a central organization under the guidance of the fascist party, having for its purposes the encouragement of the spirit of coöperation and the control of the movement.

The organization of the *mezzadri* who, besides cultivating the land of other persons, give part of the capital necessary for the undertaking, and that of the small cultivators, who spend part of their time in working for others, are not represented by the Confederation of Agriculturalists, but by the corresponding organization of agricultural laborers. Although disagreement between the associations of agricultural employers and agricultural workers is the result of this form of incorporation, yet in other ways coöperation between employers and workers is easy in agriculture, because the two are often collaborators and equally interested in the crops, especially when the laborer is paid in proportion to the return, be it in money or in grain.

The Confederation of Agriculturalists actively supports all activities of the Government aiming at increased agri-

¹ The difference between the two groups lies in the size of their estates. The land of the agriculturalists who are not direct cultivators is mostly cultivated by the *mezzadri*, while the term "landed proprietors" refers to persons with large estates.

cultural production so as to render the country independent of foreign grain. For the support of the movement the Central Institute of Agrarian Economics and Statistics was instituted, and funds are collected for agricultural research. By means of "the battle of the grain"¹ it is intended to give a strong stimulus to agricultural production, for competition leads the agriculturalists to work well. But the attempt is made to improve the methods of cultivation simultaneously. The use of fertilizers has increased greatly, a development which received a strong stimulus from the fascist agricultural policy.

The number of agricultural machines has also steadily increased. Thus the number of tractors used was 6,000 in 1924-25, 11,475 in 1925-26, 15,214 in 1926-27 and 18,185 in 1927-28. The increase in the number of fertilizers and agricultural machines does not depend exclusively upon the propaganda for better production, but also upon the solution of special problems. Thus, for instance, should the agriculturalists be obliged to conclude long-term contracts with the tenants, the use of fertilizers would certainly increase, for the tenant, assured that he will cultivate the same land for a succession of years, will try to improve it, while he will not engage in expensive measures for its betterment when he doubts whether the benefits of such action will come to him. In the latter case, when the land is intensively cultivated year after year without fertilization, so that it will give the highest possible immediate return to the cultivator, it will be gradually exhausted. The use of agricultural machines is also limited by the existence of small properties which are not large enough to permit the employment of machines. In those cases large-scale agricultural enterprises would be preferable.

¹ Contests are organized every year and a prize is given to the best grain producer of Italy by Mussolini himself. This contest is called "the battle of the grain".

"The battle of the grain" has not so much had the effect of increasing the area cultivated, as of intensifying cultivation and bettering the product. Thus the Government favors the use of high-grade seed by exchanging selected grain for the seed of the agriculturalists. The following table shows the increase in the production of grain since the beginning of "the battle of the grain".

	Cultivated Surface (in hectares)	Total Production (in quintals)	Production per hectare ¹ (in quintals)
Annual average 1919-1925	4,605,585	51,455,571	11.2
Annual average 1926-1928	4,951,233	58,518,600	11.8

At first sight the increase seems slight, but the following figures show that the three years' annual average is decreased by the low production of 1927, which was a year of unfavorable climatic conditions, while even 1926 and 1928 were not excellent agricultural years as regards weather conditions.

	Cultivated Surface (in hectares)	Total Production (in quintals)	Production per hectare ¹ (in quintals)
Annual average 1926	4,915,100	60,050,000	12.2
Annual average 1927	4,975,800	53,291,000	10.8
Annual average 1928	4,962,800	62,214,800	12.5

The desire to improve agricultural methods is present to-day

¹ Figures given to the author by the Confederation of Agriculturalists, December, 1928.

² *Ibid.*

in all modern countries and it is doubtful whether the fascists have done more for agriculture than other nations. It is also probable that any other Italian government would have adopted a similar policy, since it is rather the expression of a general tendency than a fascist innovation. Agricultural improvements are further facilitated by the well organized agricultural credit which, however, had its origin in pre-fascist times.

The improvement of the soil is not only advocated but made obligatory by the fascist Government. Whenever unemployment among agricultural workers is widespread, the experts determine how many workers could profitably be employed on a given territory in order to give an economic return at personal profit and to the advantage of the nation, and the agriculturalists are obliged to engage that number of men for special work. Thus: in the province of Emilia one man must be engaged for every hectare of cultivated land; in the province of Piemonte one man must be engaged for every four hectares. "This 'tax in workers', although it serves primarily to create rotation in the employment of surplus workers, has the effect of introducing compulsory labor on the land in the winter period, at a time when this work of preparation, vital for the increase of production, would not be undertaken without the stimulus of compulsion."¹

The compulsory land reclamation also illustrates the tendency to improve the Italian soil. The Serpieri Law provides that the proprietor of the land may reclaim it himself with the financial aid of the Government, but if he does not undertake the work, another person will be charged with it and the proprietor will be given half of the return. It is obvious that the owner of the land will in many cases lack the necessary capital to carry out the project. It is estimated that \$420,-

¹ *Il Lavoro d'Italia Agricola*, August, 1927.

000,000 is necessary for the reclamation of land still undrained, and the Government has promised \$25,000,000 in the next ten years, which leaves \$395,000,000 to be provided by private capital.

Land reclamation, although not then compulsory, was begun before the war, 700,000 hectares of marshy land having been drained. From the end of the war to September, 1927, 527,000 hectares were put under cultivation, and the reclamation of 568,000 hectares is taking place at present, leaving an area of 589,000 hectares on which work is still to be begun.¹ Land reclamation is important not only from the standpoint of production but also from the sanitary point of view, as malaria in particular is fought thereby. But the policy of the Government (which affords a characteristic illustration of the fascist principle that the Government may compel individuals to engage in a certain action, if it is to the general advantage of the country) naturally is often not looked upon favorably by the landowners, for the land reclamation may signify for them a temporary or even permanent loss of revenue. Not only are operations costly, but it is more advantageous to set out sheep in the swampy lands under a single shepherd, than to cultivate the land and hence enter into more complex labor relations. But if personal return diminishes, the national return increases, and opportunity is created for the occupation of a larger number of laborers, since it is also a policy of fascism to increase production in order to limit emigration. Furthermore, land reclamation aids the ruralization of Italy, another of fascism's aims, both for demographical reasons and because they believe that Italy has too many cities. The Government, wishing to encourage the dirt farmer, tries to make the land reclamations attractive, so that more will be cultivated. For example, the

¹ Figures given to the author by the Confederation of Agriculturalists, December, 1928.

land of the *agro romano*¹ is given free to those who promise to cultivate the soil. By its ruralization policy the Government also wishes to fight the drift to the city and the persistence of uneconomic industries.

The fascist idea of the superiority of the state over individuals has shaped its policy of land reclamation, though as a rule the control over employers does not extend to the factories. "The intervention of the state in production takes place only when private initiative is lacking or is insufficient, or when political interests of the state are involved. Such intervention may assume the form of control, of encouragement, or of direct management."² Several times, on the basis of this article of the charter of labor, agricultural employers, who, in the opinion of the responsible authorities, have failed to cultivate their lands adequately, have been obliged to turn over management of their enterprises to persons or associations appointed by the Government. However, such cases have not been numerous.

In industry, state intervention has never taken place in an official form, but has been limited to discussions between governmental authorities and the executives of the enterprises, as in the case of the electrical industry. The fascists have also rejected the idea of controlling industrial undertakings by making the state a share-holder. Whenever this has happened, as in the Ansaldo Concern and the oil industry, it has been for other reasons. Nevertheless the state is exercising a wide control. In conformity with the hierarchic principle, the higher grade associations supervise and control the lower grade associations in all their important activities in every economic field. The lower grade asso-

¹ The *agro romano* is a stretch of land near Rome, which has been neglected ever since the Roman Empire declined. The land has become swampy and is a source of malaria. The fascists hope to reclaim the land.

² *Charter of Labor*, art. 9.

ciations are not allowed to draw up collective contracts, unless such power has been especially granted to them by the proper confederation, which even may itself fix the standards or send a special delegate to assist and supervise the negotiations. In no case may the lower grade association start an action before the Labor Court. It must invoke the intervention of the confederation, and can only apply for adjudication if especially authorized by the superior organization. The budgets of the local syndicates and provincial and national federations must be approved by the confederation. Relations between the various provincial and local organs are controlled by the central associations. Ultimate approval is always reserved to the state. The minister may propose and, in case of need, decree the revision of the constitution of a syndicate; he may annul the decisions of the various syndicates in case such decisions conflict with the law and regulations or with the constitution of the syndicate.

The syndicates must submit their budgets, and expenses exceeding by one fifth the liabilities provided for in the budget, for approval to the provincial administrative board, or to the competent minister, as well as all documents concerning the endowment, the payments to the guarantee fund and all regulations, including those on the collection of contributions. In this case also, appeal from the decisions to the Government is allowed, if made within fifteen days.

The fascists explain that the various policies of control are a natural consequence of the legal recognition of the syndicates. The state thereby approves of the associations and accepts responsibility for them. Hence, it must have the right to supervise their activities and development continually. On the other hand the wide control of the Government enables it to influence the direction of production and the economic position of the workers. It may ruin an industry by favoring the workers' syndicates in their demands against

the employers, or it may accord indirect subsidies to the employers by forcing the laborers' syndicates to accept lower wages.

The law of April 3, 1926, provides that the decree recognizing a given federation or confederation stipulate the right to supervise and protect affiliated associations wholly or in part. Supervision of provincial or lower associations is vested in the prefects.

In exercising his duties, the prefect, or the competent minister, respectively, may request an association to furnish any information he may desire and to present its documents. The prefect or minister has the further power of ordering inspections or investigations into the activities of the syndicates, and he may, in case the officers of an association fail to comply with the law, the constitution or the essential aims of the syndicate, provide for the accomplishment of the necessary work at the expense of the syndicate, from which decision appeal may be made to the Government within fifteen days. At present the statutes of the various confederations vest supervision of the associated syndicates in the superior body. However this right may not only be revoked, but the prefect or the Minister of Corporations is empowered to conduct inspections at any time and to investigate the activities of the lower grade associations, in case the action of the superior organization has been ineffective. Even the provincial syndicates exercise a vigilant control over the local organizations, which must give daily accounts of their expenses and submit a monthly report of their activities.

The various activities of supervision, control and protection, will be carried out by the corporations as soon as these are created, for the corporations are definitely to assure the existence of the state above the syndicates and to coordinate the activities of the employers' and employees' syndicate associations. At present the Italian state is still in the syndicate

phase, because, as Mussolini explained at the third national congress of fascist syndicates in May, 1928, the economic crisis in Italy has not yet permitted further development, and because the syndicate system must still be perfected and the masses improved culturally. Rossoni believes that even the syndicate state does not exist as yet, and that the introduction of corporations will be difficult in view of the attitude of the capitalists, who oppose any outside control because they have not sufficient confidence in the impartiality of the Government. But he hopes nevertheless, as does Mussolini, that the people will finally become convinced that collaboration is preferable to and more advantageous than the class struggle. Others maintain that the class struggle in Italy, which is a poor country, has never had the importance which it assumes in countries where capitalism is based on great national wealth, and hence, where something to be divided exists. The struggle is of more or less importance according to the object for which one is fighting. The undersecretary of the Ministry of Corporations, Giuseppe Bottai, is of the opinion that, if the creation of the national corporations presents too many difficulties, local and provincial organizations should be established first, later to be coördinated into national organizations. Recently several meetings between the employers and the Government were held, at which the creation of corporations was discussed, but they failed to have any result, because the employers were opposed to including the representatives of the workers in the organization, and Mussolini would not consent to their discriminatory proposal. However, a short while later the commercial employers arranged for an organization which is entrusted with the tasks that should be reserved to the corporations, and the workers are not included in this body.

According to the law, the corporations would be given power to fix general rules on labor conditions, which would

be enforceable in the same manner as collective contracts. A corporation would be directed, first, by a president chosen because of his distinction in the holding of public office or his knowledge of production or labor problems, who would be appointed and removed by a decree of the Minister of Corporations, and second, by a council composed of delegates of the various syndicates, associated in the corporation, whereby the employers and employees would unite in the administration, with an equal number of representatives. The decree establishing the corporation might fix the duties of the council and the powers of the president and determine the method of appointing the delegates. The right to designate parliamentary representatives may be taken from the confederations and entrusted to the corporations, because they possess a wider vision. The fact that the corporations are state organs and hence not independent, would not render this impossible, for the syndicates are also controlled by the state.

The activities of the local branches of the corporate organs would be supervised by an officer of the prefecture or of one of the bureaus of the Ministry of National Economy, who would be a local representative of the Ministry of Corporations. As such he would cooperate with the prefect in the exercise of the duties connected with the syndicates. The officer would be subordinate to the prefect and communicate through him with the Minister of Corporations.

At one time it was believed that the intersyndicate committees, under the chairmanship of the Secretary General of the fascist party for the central committee, and of the provincial party secretaries for the other committees, could form the basis for the development of corporations, but this opinion has not been borne out. The committees were established in order to provide for a reduction in wages, believed necessary because of the deflation of the lire, and they were dissolved as soon as they had completed their tasks. Al-

though the corporations do not yet exist, the Ministry of Corporations has functioned since July, 1926, with Benito Mussolini at its head. Since the beginning of 1927, he has been assisted by the undersecretary of corporations, Giuseppe Bottai. In March, 1928, there were sixty-five employees attached to the Ministry, and as the corporate state develops, their number will undoubtedly increase.

The Ministry is studying the creation of a national council of corporations, which is to be an advisory body attached to the Ministry and which is to express its opinion on the relations among corporations or on any other question submitted to it. The law states that it is to consist of the Minister of Corporations, who acts as its chairman; the undersecretary of state at the Corporation Ministry; the director general of labor in the Ministry of National Economy; a representative of high position from each of the other ministries; two representatives from each of the legally recognized national confederations of industry and agriculture; a representative of each of the remaining recognized confederations; and a representative of each of the more important welfare institutions. The associations of public employees, which cannot obtain legal recognition, are also to be represented.

In the national council of corporations an interconnection will be established between the diverse administrations of the state, the various ministries, the representatives of the confederations and of the national organizations of the *Dopolavoro* and of the Institute for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy and of the Balilla organization,¹ in addition to some semi-state institutions, to the associations of public employees and to the national directorship of the party.²

For the study of definite problems or for the editing of

¹ The Balilla Organization is the fascist youth organization.

² Speech of Bottai in the Chamber of Deputies, June 1, 1927.

publications advisory committees may be organized by ministerial decree. At present the Ministry publishes an official bulletin, also the so-called *Corporate News*, a fortnightly publication, and a review, *The Rights of Labor*.

The expenditures in connection with the establishment and activities of the Ministry of Corporations are partly included in the state budget, and partly defrayed by a special fund, consisting of that part of the contributions of the syndicates retained by the state. In the first year of the existence of the Ministry of Corporations, 1926-27, the state spent 806,830.55 lire for the Ministry; in 1927-28, the expenditure was reduced to 166,013.80 lire.

The royal decree creating the Ministry of Corporations also provided that the corporations should be entrusted with the exclusive right to establish employment agencies. In view of the non-existence of the corporations, the Fascist Grand Council decided in November, 1927, that communal employment offices were to be instituted and directed by a mixed commission of employers and employees under the chairmanship of the secretaries of the local fascist organizations. The decree of March 29, 1928,¹ re-established the provision that the agencies shall have the exclusive privilege of placing workers. Any worker accepting employment offered to him by private persons or other organizations without the intermediary of the official agency, will be fined two hundred lire. An unemployed worker who does not enroll on the official list is subject to a fine of two hundred lire, while the employer who engages workmen not regularly enrolled, will be required to pay from fifty to three hundred lire for each worker so employed. As the same decree gives force to the article of the charter of labor which decided that preference in employment must be given to the fascists, the

¹ Royal Decree, March 29, 1928, no. 100, article 14.

probability of being placed is very slight for the non-fascist workers, especially in view of the wide-spread unemployment. Rossoni, even before the charter of labor was promulgated, had supported this idea: "In the question of employment there are also the moral, syndicate and political aspects. The organization of employers, which is fascist, should engage fascist personnel and do it through the fascist labor organizations."¹

Of course technical exigencies would justify exceptions. Rossoni advanced this point of view as a protest against the practice of some employers who systematically engaged laborers not enrolled in the fascist syndicates. Indeed, some capitalists supported fascism because it aimed at the destruction of the socialist and Catholic labor organizations but now they do not wish to negotiate with the fascist syndicates, since their opposition was due, not so much to the political faith of the organized workers, as to their organization in general, which prevented the employers from fixing such working conditions as they thought fit. That this attitude actually exists in some employers, is shown by the recent expulsion from the fascist party of an industrialist of Piedmont who has been among the first supporters of the movement, because he refused to allow his workers to be represented by the fascist labor organizations.

In view of this attitude, Rossoni would have preferred to see the employment offices directly responsible to the workers' syndicates, but it was believed that this would operate against the elimination of the class struggle, for in all probability it would not be the general interests of production which would determine the policies of the employment agencies, but the particular interests of the working class.

¹ Edmondo Rossoni, "Il Sindacalismo nella Rivoluzione Fascista," from the volume: *Civiltà Fascista*.

But if the legally recognized syndicates are not entrusted with the placement of the unemployed, they enjoy the exclusive right to make collective contracts which are binding on all engaged in the kind of work the organization represents. From July 1, 1926, to the end of 1927, the time during which the existing agreements were to be replaced by contracts with the fascist labor organizations, 2,821 provincial collective contracts were introduced, 1,118 of which were general in nature (that is, they included regulations of working conditions as well as wage agreements), and 1,703 were partial, relating only to wage agreements. They were thus distributed:

TABLE V
COLLECTIVE CONTRACTS, JULY 1, 1926-DECEMBER, 1927¹

	General	Partial	Total
Industry	728	1,336	2,064
Agriculture	194	177	371
Commerce	134	104	238
Banks	11	16	27
Maritime and aerial transportation	3	2	5
Inland transportation	48	68	116
Total	1,118	1,703	2,821

In 1928, 1,744 new provincial contracts were drawn up, of which 511 were general and 1,233 partial. They were thus distributed:

¹ Figures given to the author by the Ministry of Corporations, February, 1929.

TABLE VI
COLLECTIVE CONTRACTS, 1928¹

	General	Partial	Total
Industry	281	731	1,012
Agriculture	71	156	227
Commerce	83	135	218
Banks	18	11	29
Maritime and aerial transportation	2	2	4
Inland transportation	56	198	254
Total	511	1,233	1,744

Therefore, since the time when the exclusive right to enter into collective agreements with the employers was accorded to the fascist organizations, in all 4,565 provincial collective contracts have been concluded; that is, 1,629 general and 2,936 partial, distributed as follows:

TABLE VII
COLLECTIVE CONTRACTS, JULY 1, 1926-DECEMBER 31, 1928²

Industry	3,076
Agriculture	598
Commerce	456
Banks	56
Marit. & aerial transp.	9
Inland transportation	370
Total	4,565

The fact that so many more collective contracts have been established in industry than in agriculture clearly illustrates how much more developed is the sense of organization in the industrial field. The regional and interprovincial contracts concluded up to July, 1928, amounted to 106, the national contracts to 51.³

¹ Figures given by the Ministry of Corporations, February, 1929.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

The law of April 3, 1926, and the regulation for its enforcement in the royal decree of July 1, 1926, provide that the terms of collective contracts must be specific, so as not to admit easily of equivocation. Unless the nature of the enterprise and the territory in which the contract is to apply are named, it comprises all employers and employees who are represented at the time of the negotiation. The contracts must specify the time of their duration and must be made out in writing. If these conditions are not respected, the contract has no validity. It is not applicable before the approval of the representative higher grade association has been given.

All collective contracts and regulations pertaining thereto, in order to be enforceable, must be filed at the local prefecture and be published in the official bulletin of the province, or in case of regional, interprovincial and national associations, must be deposited at the Ministry of National Economy and published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno*. In case the contract applies to organizations operating in different provinces, a copy must be filed with the Ministry of Corporations as well as with the Ministry of National Economy.

All measures contained in collective contracts which have been duly negotiated, approved, deposited and published have the same force as factory regulations.

Collective contracts are not allowed to embrace matters decided by public regulations or legal provisions, since that would either be unnecessary, or in conflict with the law. With this exception only the regulation of personal and domestic services by collective contracts is prohibited, because of the more intimate relations between individuals as compared to group relations. Any agreements entered into in disregard of this provision are void.

Whenever collective labor contracts are in force, all individual agreements already existing or later concluded which

are incompatible with them, are automatically replaced by the provisions of the collective contracts, so that confusion is impossible. However, to regulate special services of individual employees to their employers, additional clauses to the advantage of the workers are permitted.

At the time of the expiration of a collective contract, no new negotiations are necessary, as the contract is automatically renewed for a similar period unless complaint is made by one of the interested parties, either while the contract is in force, or within the following two months. As a rule the contracts are guaranteed by a fund of ten per cent of the syndicate contributions, set aside for that purpose. In case recognition of an association bound by a collective contract is withdrawn, the receiver may use the funds of the organization for the fulfilment of the obligations assumed in the collective contract during the entire time of its duration and for one succeeding year, but correspondingly the rights granted in collective contracts are not abrogated by the withdrawal of recognition.

Since collective contracts are negotiated by the syndicates, damages resulting from any non-fulfilment of the assumed obligations are chargeable to them, and, in case they have specifically agreed to guarantee the contract, they are responsible for the failure of their members to carry out the provisions. The defaulting members are civilly responsible to their own organizations as well as to the other party of the contract, but may only be punished if they have not tried to do their duty in every way.

Notwithstanding these regulations, obedience to collective contracts has not been general, and is lacking especially in the south of Italy. It has already been said that the fact that the contracts have been made by legally recognized associations renders them enforceable. Even before legal recognition the validity of collective contracts had been recognized,

theoretically at least, for all members of a syndicate, even if they were not employed in the enterprise where the agreement originated.¹

In January, 1928, Farinacci, former secretary of the fascist party, denounced the violation of collective contracts, and Rossoni immediately took up the argument. A general discussion resulted, during which the attitude of a number of employers, especially in the small centers and the rural districts, was disclosed. An official of the agrarian syndicate in Brescia declared that the employers did not even accept the decisions of the conciliation commissions, in which they are represented. Other employers have maintained that the non-application of collective contracts did not concern the workers' syndicates, but that action could be taken only by the workers individually. This opinion was rejected by the court, and, according to the law, the individual worker, whether an enrolled member in the syndicate or not, is only to start an action fifteen days after notifying the association concerned. Upon notification the association will usually take over the case, paying the expenses if the worker is unable to do so. But the workers do not report infractions of rules for fear of losing their jobs, and also because until recently no means existed to enforce the contracts, and no penalties were imposed for non-application. On November 17, 1927, Bottai pointed out in the Fascist Grand Council that the contracts were neither duly deposited nor published. In March he revealed in the Chamber of Deputies that infractions of collective contracts usually took the following forms: wages are imposed below those provided for in the agreement; workers are employed without regard to the clauses concerning the "tax in workers"; the clause on the preference to be given to the fascists is ignored. The in-

¹ Royal Court of Cassations, decision of March 30, 1925, Baroni v. Ghilarducci.

quiry of January 30, 1927, proved that by far the greatest number of infractions occurred in agriculture, that few were found in industry, and almost none in other fields of production. 1,000 cases were reported by the prefects; 1,876 by the interested persons to their syndicates. Of these, 1,542 cases were settled by March, 1928. Further steps were taken to limit the non-application of collective contracts. The royal decree of February 24, 1928, on the settlement of individual controversies, provides for a fine of from 300 to 5,000 lire for the guilty employer.

In July Mussolini sent a notice to the prefects, stating that a fine of from 500 to 10,000 lire was to be imposed for failure to register a collective contract. The prefects or the Ministry of Corporations were immediately to send a copy to the Ministry of National Economy and to the Labor Inspection Department which within thirty days were to express their opinions as to whether all laws had been respected. Should they fail to act within that time, it was to be interpreted as a favorable judgment. In case the contract was criticized, appeal to the Ministry of National Economy was allowed the interested parties.

Whenever the contracts were not approved by the superior association, but were endorsed by the Ministry of National Economy, the order that they be published rendered ultimate approval by the superior body unnecessary. The notice further stipulated that contracts not duly deposited or published had no legal validity. This opinion had not been held before, as is shown by the decision of the Labor Court in the case of the rice workers, when it was declared that a contract not deposited and published was by no means void, but did not apply to those workers who were not members of the association which had assisted in its conclusion.

As a result of the new provisions, up to December 31, 1928, 105 national collective contracts were registered at the

Ministry of Corporations; 39 thereof relating to industry, 17 to commerce, 25 to banks, 6 to agriculture, 3 to maritime and aerial transportation and 15 to land transportation. Only 10 of these contracts had been published at that date, that is, the three relating to maritime and aerial transportation, five relating to banks and two to industry.

The conclusion of national or provincial collective contracts is salutary, because thereby the advantages obtained are extended to a great number of workers, while strikes had only brought local benefits. But it also has its difficulties, because the higher grade associations, in drawing up an agreement, cannot take account of special labor conditions and hence the provisions of the contract are often too rigidly drawn. Moreover, the local syndicates frequently are not willing to confront and settle resulting difficulties, but leave it to the employer to find a means of adapting the provisions to the local needs.

Even should the contracts be carefully respected, the economic position of the Italian workers would not be enviable. The "tax in workers", adopted to reduce unemployment, also resulted in a lowering of wages, though a certain amount of social justice is obtained since it results in slight disadvantages to many rather than serious difficulties to a few. On the other hand the eight-hour day is not respected: "The industrialists demand in many cases eleven and twelve hours of labor".¹ Although the law provides for an increase of ten per cent in wages for overtime work, this clause is usually ignored.

At first collective contracts brought about a slight improvement in the conditions of the working classes. Especially in the south of Italy wages were raised. There was an

¹ Declaration of the syndicate representative in Milan, Cuzzi, at the third national congress of fascist syndicates, quoted from *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 8, 1928.

attempt to include in the contracts the privileges guaranteed to the workers in the charter of labor, such as the discharge indemnity and the annual period of paid vacations, but the employers frequently tend to interpret these provisions in a way which renders them practically nil. Thus, for instance, an annual paid vacation of one or two days was advocated as sufficient and as obedient, if not to the spirit, to the letter of the charter of labor. On the other hand, the prefect of Ferrara, in October, 1928, decided a dispute on pensions to be paid to the workers on the basis of the charter, declaring that they were to correspond to the twenty-five years of service of the workers in the establishment, and not to the five years during which the last proprietor had been their employer.

The pay of the agricultural laborers is especially low. To cite an average case: a collective contract, concluded in March, 1927, for the province of Verona, stipulated that for ordinary work the day laborer should receive 12 lire for seven hours of work from November to February; during the months of March and April and of September and October 13.50 lire for eight hours of work; and from May to August, 17 lire for nine hours of work. For extra work a daily average of two lire would be added. Women would receive 6, 7 and 9 lire for the corresponding periods, which would be one lira an hour in the last case, and less in the other two cases.

At times a further reduction of wages was impossible. When, early in 1927, the prices for agricultural products fell, the Confederation of Agriculturalists asked for a reduction in wages and a more considerate application of the "tax in workers". As the cost of living had not decreased proportionally, Mussolini requested the president of the Confederation of Agriculturalists, Gino Cacciari, not to insist on his demand at that moment, and with this request Cacciari complied. In July, 1927, the Labor Court fixed

the wages for the workers in the rice fields at from 16.40 to 18.30 lire according to province, and at 18.90 lire for the workers who had migrated from other parts of Italy.

But when the lira was stabilized at the end of 1927, wages were generally reduced by from ten to twenty per cent. Only when prices failed to decline in Italy did the intersyndicate committees, which were entrusted with the fixation of wages, cease to reduce them. In the south of Italy the average daily pay for agricultural workers was from 10 to 12 lire in the first months of 1928, according to a statement of Rossoni.¹ Minimum wages do not exist in Italy, for the charter of labor specifically rejects the idea, and Bottai has explained that they are only necessary when the interests of the laborers are not sufficiently defended by their syndicate organizations, which is not the case in Italy. Nevertheless, minimum wages are persistently demanded by the working population and at present negotiations are being carried on which may lead to their introduction in the province of Turin.

It is not correct to blame the syndicate system exclusively for the difficult position of the Italian workers, as other economic factors have contributed to this depression, which, in turn makes it harder to apply the fascist syndicate system and retards its development.

Moreover, the system is said to be very costly. Some anti-fascists even claim that the entire syndicate system is nothing but a machine set up to collect contributions. To this charge Bottai has answered that the contributions correspond to what is received in return and that neither an individual, an institution, an organization, an association, nor the state should gain from the payment of the contributions.

The law of April 3, 1926, provides that all persons pur-

¹ E. Rossoni, speech at the third national congress of fascist syndicates, May 6, 1928.

suing a given kind of work, whether regularly enrolled members in the syndicates or not, must pay an annual contribution to the recognized syndicate of their profession, not to exceed, in the case of the employer, one day's total payroll to his employees, and in the case of the employee, one day's earnings. Additional contributions collected by the associations cannot be imposed on non-enrolled members, nor can regulations, except labor regulations, bind them. To avoid evasion of the law, employers are in duty bound to report each year the number of their employees to the syndicates. Those failing to do so or giving incorrect or incomplete information, are subject to a fine up to two thousand lire. The prefects compile lists of professional men and artists by means of the information furnished to them by the municipalities, which may compel registration of any person practising an art or profession in the district within three months of his establishment.

Compulsory contributions must be approved by the provincial administrative board if a local association is concerned, or by the Minister of Corporations, in case of a higher association, from which decision of approval appeal may be made to the Government by any person concerned. In case the fixing of the contribution on the basis of one day's payroll or earnings is not possible, decision of the case rests with the Minister of Corporations. Lists of contributors are posted publicly, and any person may, within a month, protest against his enrollment to the provincial administrative board, or to the Minister of Corporations. The decisions of these officials are final, unless recourse to the courts is permitted under conditions analogous to recourse against the levelling of taxes.

The contributions are subtracted from the employees' salaries by the check-off system, and are turned over to the associations. Unless the Minister of Corporations vests the

right of assessment of the employers' compulsory contributions in the associations by decree, the regular tax collectors collect the money and turn it over to the prefecture. Ten per cent of the contributions, placed in a special cash account of the Ministry of Corporations, are to constitute a guarantee fund out of which obligations assumed by the associations in collective contracts, are met. The prefect is authorized to order payment to the associations of lower and higher grade, the respective rates being fixed by a decree of the Minister of Corporations, on request of the highest grade association concerned. The expenditures are partly compulsory and partly optional. Those entered into for educational or welfare purposes or incurred in connection with professional instruction, insurance, and moral and religious assistance to members, are compulsory. All other expenditures are optional. Higher grade organizations may not impose contributions on individual employers or employees, but their constitutions may provide for contributions by the affiliated associations in addition to those fixed by the Minister of Corporations.

The practical application of this provision presented many difficulties. The collection of the contributions by the regular tax collectors seemed unwise for political reasons. In February, 1927,¹ the Ministry of Corporations made use of its right to determine contributions whenever it is difficult to fix these on the basis of one day's payroll or earnings, and the royal decree of July 27, 1928, decided on the means of payment for 1928 and 1929.² It was confirmed that the contribution of the employees should be subtracted from the salaries. This check-off system is in general favored by the workers, because they avoid the expenses in connection with the collection and administration of the

¹ *Royal Decree*, February 24, 1927, no. 241.

² *Royal Decree*, July 27, 1928, no. 1802.

funds, but in Italy the criticism is often advanced that the check-off system is unfair, for it is impossible for the worker to refuse payment. The employers are requested to pay their contributions by using the postal money services.

In industry the employers pay 8.50 lire monthly for every director, technician, administrator, office head or other higher employee, 5 lire for every employee with a monthly compensation of 800 lire and 2.50 lire for those who receive less than 800 lire a month. The same sums are due from the office employees. As to the workers receiving a lower remuneration and home workers, the employer and the worker pay 0.333 lire for every hundred lire of payroll or earnings. The Confederation of Industry fixes the contributions to be paid by artisans with the approval of the Ministry of Corporations.

In agriculture the fixing of contributions is very difficult. In every province a commission of one worker and one employer, each one nominated by his own confederation, and presided over by the director of the "flying brigade", determines the contributions of the various groups. The decision must be approved by the Ministry of Corporations. In the case of the *mezzadri*, the family is regarded as the productive unit, and as such it pays one per cent of its income as determined in the tax report. If its income is too low to be taxed, an estimate is made of the daily earnings. The contribution amounts to about ten lire a year, but in agriculture many do not pay at all, because it is difficult to enforce the law rigidly.

In banking a commission of one worker and one employer and of a representative of each of the respective confederations, presided over by an official of the Ministry of Corporations, decides on the contributions. However, a minimum sum to be paid by the employers can be established by the Ministry of Corporations, which may also augment the sum decided upon by the commission.

In commerce the Ministry of Corporations fixes a round sum, to be paid by the employers. This sum amounted in 1927, 1928 and 1929 to 42,800,000 lire each year. Individual contributions are fixed in the following manner: Those who have made the deposit required by the decree of December 16, 1926,¹ as a guarantee for the exercise of a commercial profession, fixed in proportion to their annual income, give the annual interest they receive on this deposit as their contribution. As to the others, those who have an annual income up to 5,000 lire, pay 25 lire as their contribution; those who earn from 5,000 to 10,000 lire pay an additional sum of 0.75 lire for every hundred lire above 5,000 lire; those whose income lies between 10,000 and 20,000 lire pay 1 additional lira for every hundred lire above 10,000 lire; and those having an annual income exceeding 20,000 lire pay a contribution of 250 lire.

These sums from the commercial employees exceed one day's income if their earnings are small. Let us suppose that a person has an annual income of 6,000 lire. This would correspond to an average daily compensation of 16 or 17 lire, while he is paying a 32.50 lire tax. Contributions from the commercial employers, are therefore not fixed at one day's payroll to their employees, which would be less than the daily income since they gain a considerable sum above their labor expenses, but at a much higher sum. The same would hold true in case of an annual income of 24,000 lire, which would correspond to an average daily income of 66.60 lire, while the contribution is fixed at 250 lire. However, should a person have an annual income of 240,000 lire, his average daily compensation would be correspondingly 666 lire, while he would still pay the flat sum of 250 lire as his syndicate contribution, e. g., less than one day's earnings. This again seems to indicate the tendency of the fascist legislators to favor the wealthy group.

¹ Royal Decree of December 16, 1926, no. 2174.

The Confederation is entrusted with fixing the contributions of the employees of commercial enterprises. They have thus decided: the directors are required to pay 96 lire, the executives 84 lire, the other high employees, 72 lire. The workers, earning 300 lire a month, pay 15 lire, those with a monthly income of from 300 to 800 lire, 30 lire, and those receiving more than 800 lire monthly, 60 lire. Here again contributions are higher than the law of April 3, 1926, provides. One day's earnings amount to 10 lire for a laborer of the first group, while he is obliged to pay a 15 lire contribution. For every worker earning 600 lire a month, the daily compensation amounts to 20 lire, while he must pay 30 lire as a contribution; even if he earns 800 lire monthly his daily income amounts only to 26 or 27 lire, and the workers paying a contribution of 60 lire should earn 1,800 lire a month, if the contribution were to correspond to one day's earnings, while actually 60 lire must be paid by all those receiving a monthly compensation above 800 lire.

It will perhaps be said that these additional sums are not very important, but they play a role in view of the low wages and the high cost of living in Italy, and certainly the sum of all these additions presents a large return to the syndicates or the Ministry of Corporations. Nor is it justifiable to object that the contributions formerly imposed by the socialist labor organizations were much higher, for they were voluntarily assumed by the individuals, and not compulsory for all laborers.

The Ministry of Corporations has fixed the sum of 6,400,000 lire as payable by the employers engaged in inland transportation. Those operating intermunicipal trolley car, railroad or navigation lines, pay 40 per cent of their fiscal tax; those not subject to a fiscal tax pay twenty per cent of their gross income. All others pay 30 lire per motor vehicle and 10 lire per sailing or rowing boat. Whenever these con-

tributions do not suffice to make up the sum of 6,400,000 lire, the Ministry of Corporations can revise the contributions; should the sum be surpassed, it can order the excess to be redistributed, as is the case for commerce. The competent confederation, entrusted with the fixing of the contributions of the employees, has determined that executives pay 130 lire, directors 100 lire and other high employees 80 lire. The laborers, as in the case of the commercial workers, pay 15 lire if they have a monthly wage of 300 lire, 30 lire on an income of from 301 to 800 lire and 60 lire, if the monthly compensation exceeds 800 lire.

The contributions in the field of maritime and aerial transportation are fixed according to the income. Employers and employees pay according to the same criteria. On the transatlantic ships contributions run from 37.50 lire for the cabin boy to 225 lire for the captain. On other ships the highest contribution amounts to 150 lire. On sailing boats of more than 500 tons, the personnel pay from 18 to 90 lire; on ships from 300 to 500 tons the cabin boy pays the lowest annual contribution, of 12 lire, and the captain the highest, of 60 lire; or ships of from 100 to 300 tons, contributions run from 7.50 to 36 lire, and on ships of 100 tons or less, from 6 to 24 lire. The administrative employees (office workers, pursers, steamship agents, etc.) for transatlantic ships pay from 60 lire for porters to 150 lire for the higher employees. In like manner from 45 to 150 lire are paid on other ships.

In aerial transportation contributions run from 45 to 150 lire. For partly dismantled ships contributions are reduced for the employers.

As their contribution the intellectual workers pay one per cent of their annual income as ascertained for the purposes of the income tax. Whenever the intellectuals cannot pay according to this rate, they are asked to notify the confed-

eration, which will entrust a commission with the determination of the annual amount to be paid. The Ministry of Corporations must approve every decision. For the employees of the intellectuals, contributions are fixed according to the average wage.

These various contributions, taken together, made up in 1927 a sum of 150,870,000 lire which was thus distributed by a decree of the Ministry of Corporations:

To National Confederations	52,308,000	} 109,994,000
To National Federations	20,606,000	
To Regional and Provincial Associations	37,080,000	
To the Ministry of Corporations	15,087,000	
Set aside as a guarantee fund for collective contracts	13,598,000	
To the <i>Patronato Nazionale</i> and other welfare organizations	12,191,000	
Total	150,870,000 ¹	

To these compulsory contributions must be added the optional ones, which amount to several additional millions. The highest figure was reached by the Confederation of Workers, which includes all workers except the sea and air workers, with the figure of 21,000,000 lire; the lowest by the Confederation of Banks with 1,976 lire. Compulsory and optional contributions together amounted to 181,758,000 lire, paid in the following proportion by the different confederations:

Confederation of Workers	63,180,000
Sea and air workers	3,661,000
Artisans' federations	3,313,000
Industry	53,969,000
Agriculturalists	38,940,000
Commerce	4,910,000
Inland transportation	6,524,000
Marit. & aerial transp.	3,281,000
Banks	3,980,000
Total	181,758,000

¹ Figures given by Giuseppe Bottai in the Chamber of Deputies, March 17, 1928.

These contributions are decidedly too high, as even the undersecretary of the Ministry of Corporations, Bottai, recognizes. Compulsory contributions should be reduced and additional ones completely abolished, as has already been done by the employers' and workers' Confederation of Maritime and Aerial Enterprises, the Confederation of Industry and the Confederation of Banks. The Confederation of Commerce and that of Inland Transportation have abolished all optional contributions to the higher grade associations, but the lower grade associations may collect such contributions from the individual members.

Notwithstanding the high contributions, the General Confederation of Workers had a debit item of 236,545.60 lire at the end of 1927, but in April, 1928, the budget showed a surplus of 6,542,723.64 lire, that is, in this short period, an increase of 6,779,269.24 lire. The confederation had collected 30,352,824 lire up to that time, a sum which was inferior to its expectations. Evasions occurred especially in commerce and in agriculture, where the contributions collected amounted to 4,000,000 lire against a sum about ten times as large, collected by the employers' Confederation of Agriculturalists. Of the sum realized the Confederation of Workers retained 40.50 per cent, or 17,076,116 lire for its own use; to the national federations 11.70 per cent was allotted, amounting to 4,937,080 lire; 5.40 per cent or 6,061,878 lire were given to the syndicates; 14.40 per cent or 2,277,750 lire to the provincial syndicates. The Confederation used 4,000,000 lire for the creation of an insurance system, and 580,828 lire were paid in salaries to the employees of the Confederation. The Confederation of Agriculture retains 52.78 per cent of its annual income, 32 per cent of which must be spent for the most needy provincial federations. For all other central organizations except industry, the quota to be retained is from 4. to 21 per cent. All confederations, taken

together, paid, according to the Ministry of Corporations, 7,468,335 lire in remunerations to its employees and directors; 11,505,368 lire were spent in social and economic assistance; and the general expenses amounted to 6,136,161 lire.

The number of officials in the syndicate associations amounted to about 8,000 for the workers' syndicates and 10,000 for the employers' associations in March, 1927; by February, 1928, the workers' syndicates were also employing 10,000 persons. In March, 1927, there were 7,000 provincial syndicates of the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, in February, 1928, 12,000 existed. In March 1927, in addition to 6 national federations 137 general syndicates for the different kinds of labor and 90 national unions were maintained. The general confederation also had 92 provincial offices.

The responsible persons in the Government recognize that it is imperative to reduce the number of employees in the organizations and the number of syndicate organizations themselves, for the system should be rendered more economical. It is only to be explained by the high contributions received that the Ministry of Corporations realized an excess of fifteen million lire in its first year, which it distributed in the following manner:

To the national youth organization <i>Balilla</i>	4,000,000
To the Institute for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy	4,000,000
To anti-tubercular institutes	3,000,000
To recreational establishments	3,000,000
Distributed among laborers with large families	1,500,000 ¹

This surplus notwithstanding, we may conclude that the entire organization shows the defects that are encountered in every bureaucracy: it is too costly, the number of employees

¹ Figures given by Giuseppe Bottai in the Chamber of Deputies, March 17, 1928.

is too high and the services rendered do not correspond to the sacrifices made by individuals in paying their contributions. But these difficulties are also recognized by the authorities. It is said that much is still in a state of flux and experimentation, and that many existing abuses are an outcome of the situation rather than the result of defects in the abstract conception.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL WELFARE AND EDUCATION

LONG before fascism came into power the Labor Inspection Department had been created in Italy to enforce the welfare laws and it is still functioning very actively to-day. Many undertakings for the benefit of the workers have been continued under the new Government, such as the labor bank. Moreover, fascism, like the governments of other countries, has engaged in the construction of model houses for the wage-earners and low-salaried employees. The charter of labor proposes a program of social insurance with universal application. Insurance against tuberculosis has been introduced, and, in July, 1928, a commission was created to study the possibility of compulsory insurance against all illnesses.

Already, even in the smaller factories, physicians have been appointed to guard the health of the workers. In the province of Brescia, this aid is not limited to the curing of the sick, but the prevention of illness is attempted as well. It will take some time for the system to come into full operation, but it may nevertheless be interesting to outline it. Every physician who treats a worker is required to take care not only of the specific trouble, but to ascertain the general state of health of the patient. He must also inquire into his living and working conditions. He then sends a complete report to the syndicate, which, in the course of time, will have a comprehensive record not only of the state of health of the workers in the province, but also of sanitary conditions in the homes and factories. On the basis of this information and data concerning the most frequently recurring illnesses, a

study will be undertaken to ascertain whether certain changes in the food, housing or working conditions would not eliminate the causes of certain diseases. Furthermore, because of the exact knowledge of the physical condition of the worker, a scientific organization of the workers in the factory will be possible, so that every one may be employed in that kind of work in which he can use his energies most efficiently and at tasks which will not impose too heavy a physical strain on him.

We cannot, however, take the conditions of Brescia as reflecting those of other Italian districts. Until recently under the leadership of Luigi Begnotti, Brescia was among the most progressive provinces from the point of view of social welfare activities. There they have also attempted to mitigate the distress of unemployment: every unemployed man is said to have received a daily allowance of fifteen or twenty lire according to the size of his family, which allowance he may exchange for food in any coöperative enterprise. By this arrangement the possibility that the money will not be spent sensibly, is in part avoided.

But all these plans are still only local and are insufficient in view of the difficult situation in which the Italian laboring class finds itself. The legally recognized syndicates are bound by the law of April 3, 1926, to provide enrolled and unenrolled members of their group with education and training in order to improve constantly their technical skill, and to protect the workers morally and materially. In June, 1925, the *Patronato Nazionale* was founded by the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates for assistance to the workers in case of accidents at work. It has the further task of diffusing knowledge of the social welfare laws among the laboring population, especially in the rural districts of Italy.

In 1926, the insurance companies offered 18,898,949 lire in indemnities to workers and their families for 23,459

accidents in industry. Due to the intervention of the *Patronato Nazionale*, 25,576,989 lire were paid, a gain of 6,678,040 lire for the workers. Of the 23,459 cases which the *Patronato* took up, 13,102 were settled by December 31, 1926, 10,863 with a favorable, and 2,239 with unfavorable results for the workers. In agriculture the indemnities paid would have amounted to 4,077,111 lire without the intervention of the *Patronato*, which raised the figure to 5,250,704 lire, an increase of over a million lire.

In addition the *Patronato* distributed 2,080 pensions to invalids, amounting to 393,491 lire; 6,143 old-age pensions, amounting to 1,197,956 lire. It gave 4,182 pensions to families whose bread winner had died, amounting to 787,500 lire, and it made 932 maternity allotments, totaling 73,600 lire. It also distributed subsidies to the unemployed: 63,091 requests were presented during the year; the confederation conceded 12,394,375 lire for 3,537,677 days of individual unemployment, but actually only 5,580,140 lire were paid, corresponding to 1,601,196 days.

In 1927, the *Patronato* increased its activities. 51,320 industrial accidents and 18,769 agricultural ones were taken care of, a total of 70,089. Of these cases, 32,028 and 13,784 respectively had been concluded by the end of the year. As a result, indemnities paid by the insurance companies amounted to 60,000,000 and 10,680,520 lire respectively, against 44,711,774 and 8,366,387 lire which they had at first offered to pay. The gains in favor of the workers, 14,555,825 and 2,314,136 lire respectively, making a total of 16,896,961 lire, were due solely to the action of the *Patronato*.¹ The greatest number of indemnities were paid in the industrial provinces of the North, Milan, Genoa, Trieste and Bologna.

¹ Figures taken from the report of Rossoni at the third national congress of fascist syndicates, quoted in *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928. It is realized that these figures do not add up correctly, but they are given in this form by the official organ.

But the *Patronato* also enforces rigid application of the compulsory social insurance laws in the individual enterprises. During 1927, it notified 20,512 firms that the *Patronato* was aware of their neglect of the social welfare laws, and would take further action unless the situation was immediately corrected. In fact, 10,552 enterprises were denounced by them to the authorities. As a result the national bank for social insurance received 2,124,420 lire in contributions.

In 1927, the number demanding unemployment subsidies had increased to 255,964, and 34,193,768 lire were paid for 9,668,076 workdays of unemployment, which is only an average of 3.70 lire a day, still less than the year before. But the *Patronato* hoped to develop an extensive placement of the unemployed and so to mitigate the situation. In 1927, 878,897 laborers were enrolled in the employment offices and 638,401 requests for workers were received. The *Patronato* found work for 643,086 individuals within the provinces and it secured employment for 88,299 outside, especially in the rice fields of the Po Valley. The *Patronato* had also assisted 12,557 emigrants, and even came to the aid of Italian laborers abroad in case of accidents. But the *Patronato* could not develop its unemployment offices, for they were unfavorably regarded by many employers' associations, by other institutions and by the intellectuals, because they tended towards monopoly. All activities came to an end as the result of the decree of March 29, 1928,¹ which entrusted to the communities exclusively the placement of the workers.

Central legal offices with branches at the provincial federations were maintained by the *Patronato* for the use of the workers. They handle collective and individual controversies, even if the latter are not based on a collective contract. In 1926, 858 cases were heard, of which 756 were won and 102 lost. In 1927, the total number was increased

¹ Royal Decree of March 29, 1928, no. 1003.

to 1,700 cases, of which 1,528 ended in success and 232 in defeat for the *Patronato*.¹ The cases are examined beforehand by the lawyers of the *Patronato*, who are paid only for the cases they win. The expenses are borne partly or completely by the syndicate whenever the individual worker cannot afford to pay them.

Moreover, a central medical office has been established by the *Patronato*, with branches in many provincial cities. In 1926, 40,899 patients were received and 29,228 medical certificates were given out. In 1927, the *Patronato* began to organize medical and surgical assistance for the laborers and their families in their homes. A physician is placed at the head of the office, and is paid by the syndicates, though specialists frequently offer their services to the syndicates without compensation. As soon as the provincial federations are located in their own buildings, regular hospitals will be established there, and, undoubtedly, the medical service will thereby receive a great stimulus and its work will be extended.

Future tendencies in this field can be judged by the work of the medical office of the Seamen's Confederation in Genoa, which has always been separated from the *Patronato*, even when the Federation was autonomous and not included in the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates. The physicians in this sailors' home care for about 3,000 cases a month but they do not by any means examine all sailors arriving at or leaving Genoa, desirable as this would be. A surgical department has been established, and special attention is paid to the diseases most frequent among sailors. Specialists are engaged for the eye, ear and throat department. The service most in demand is that of the dentists. In case of accidents, the medical office is of course at the

¹ *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 6, 1928. It is realized that these figures do not add up correctly, but they are given in this form by the official source.

service of the sailors, and the Confederation takes over the case eventually and presents an indemnity claim to the proper institution, as does the *Patronato* for the land workers.

The sailors do not yet make free use of their opportunities. Only slowly will they gain confidence and change their attitude towards the aid given them, and much still remains to be done by the syndicates. Not only should the visits to the homes and the illness-prevention work be extended, but free medicines should be given. At present, it is frequently the case that after a medical examination a patient has not the money to go to the pharmacy, and the physicians of the syndicates are discouraged, because their services alone cannot help the worker and are often useless, because incomplete. Free hospitals should also be maintained at the service of the workers. In Venice a sanitation assistant is attached to the medical office of the Confederation of Seamen, and is entrusted with hygiene propaganda, and the improvement of the conditions of the sailors.

The assistance given by the Seamen's Confederation to the sea workers has many interesting aspects. Lodging for the unemployed, which has been provided for in Genoa and Trieste, has met with special success. Thereby the sailors and the officers of the ships are assured a decent, well heated sleeping place with bath facilities for the sum of one lire a night. The unemployed officers and sailors, or those waiting for the sailing of the ships, can also get their meals at the Seamen's Home. A substantial, but simple meal is served to the sailors for 2.50 lire and a somewhat more elaborate meal for the officers costs 3 lire. They are served at tables covered with white cloth, and wine is provided. This service is very much appreciated by the seamen, so much so that it is impossible to satisfy all those who come to the Confederation, because unemployment is extremely widespread among them. Furthermore, in cases of special need, the sailors

are lodged and boarded free of charge. In 1927, 15,787 slept in the house of the Confederation in Genoa, and 2,924 of them had paid nothing, because they could not afford the one lire for the night. In the same house, 29,306 meals were distributed in 1927, of which 5,390 were gratuitous. At the Seamen's Home the sailors find also a place where they can pass the day in recreation.

The Confederation of Sea and Air Workers has also engaged in other activities. It not only has a legal office, similar to that of the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, but special attention is paid to the health of the children of sailors. Those undernourished or troubled with slight illnesses though essentially healthy, are sent to mountain colonies; those predisposed towards or attacked by tuberculosis are placed in permanent colonies, where their cure is attempted. As a result of these efforts not only have many children regained their health, but their families are full of gratitude towards the Confederation. Much, however, remains to be done in this field, since lack of funds hinders the work.

For a long time institutions have existed, which have for their object caring for sailors' orphans, but the organizations are not interconnected and each one is struggling with financial difficulties. The project for the construction of a home for old and disabled sailors remains unrealized for financial reasons, and it is only upon the urging of the Confederation that the Bank of the Invalids of the Merchant Marine has finally donated a sum large enough to permit the establishment of one such home, which will be situated at Camogli. The same bank, the capital of which is made up of the savings of the sailors, assuring an income for their old age, has also contributed the sum of twenty million lire to the Institute of Naval Credit, created by the Government. This contribution, however, has been severely criticized, on the ground

that the sum is invested in a speculative enterprise and no chances should be taken when the savings of the sailors are concerned. All other provisions for the aid of the sailors originated prior to the coming of fascism. Nevertheless, general projects are under way for their integration, modernization and improvement. Special insurance systems are maintained by some of the large shipping companies.

The same is true in the aeronautic field. Notwithstanding the activity of the Confederation of Sea and Air Workers, the condition of the seamen and airmen is really desperate, due to causes which they are not able to control. Their salaries are at the lowest possible level, and unemployment is very widespread. Again the economic situation retards the realization of the syndicate program.

Nevertheless, since economic difficulties are general among the workers, it makes a decided difference whether the assistance, even if it is not proportional to the needs, is well organized. The charter of labor urges the establishment of special sickness' funds to which the employers and employees are to contribute, and which will be administered in common. At the headquarters of the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, a central office has been established for that purpose. The plan is that, in case of illness, the workers shall find general and specialized medical service at their disposal; when necessary they are to be sent to hospitals and their families are to be supported during their illness. But development of these institutions is slow. A national scheme should be developed, the work should be undertaken in each one of the different provinces, but at present the creation of mutuals under the direction of the provincial syndicate in Brescia has been carried out only in the metal industries. The administration is entrusted directly to the workers, and the result is very satisfactory, for, while the workers recognize the needs of their fellows, because they have also experienced

them, on the other hand they do not wish to waste their savings when it is not necessary. The administration is actually controlled by the fascist syndicate. Not only are the members of the administrative council chosen by the secretary general of the provincial syndicate, even against the will of the general assembly, but the secretary and the treasurer of the administration also belong to the syndicate. Nevertheless, it is insisted that no discrimination is shown to the laborers who are not enrolled members in the syndicate, and this is even confirmed by workers who otherwise are not favorable to fascist syndicalism.

In Brescia, also, the cultural assistance to the workers required of the syndicates by the charter of labor, has been developed by means of conferences, courses on social legislation and on syndicate culture, and by the establishment of libraries. The Confederation of Fascist Syndicates established the "Fascist Syndicate University of the People". This somewhat pretentious name was later changed by a superior authority to "Syndicate Committee for Propaganda and Culture". In Brescia an extensive schedule of conferences was drawn up, including such general subjects as "the ethical importance of art in civilization" and "history", providing a theoretical syndicate education by lectures on "the state", "the cost of production" and "syndicalism in public law", taking account of the necessity of a wide vocational instruction by conferences on "the diseases of cattle" or "fertilizers and fertilization"; and finally propagating hygiene ideas in conferences on "the hygiene of nourishment", "alcoholism and nervous illnesses", "the hygiene of the home" and "occupational diseases". The lectures are attended with great enthusiasm and are open to all workers, whether they are members of the syndicate or not. This plan for popular instruction must not be confused with the special syndicate school, es-

tablished in Genoa in 1928, for the training of the future syndicate officials.

The creation of institutions to study better production methods and diffuse information about them, also required by the charter of labor, has been begun so far only for agriculture. The "flying brigade" attempts to carry knowledge of modern agricultural methods into rural districts, by holding conferences in places, which otherwise are out of touch with the rapidly changing currents of modern life. It is hoped thereby not only to stimulate agricultural production, but also to fight the drift to the city by teaching the farmers to love the soil they cultivate and by putting them in a position to enjoy some of the cultural advantages they would have in the cities. A few automobiles are at the service of the "flying brigade", but here again, although the courses are followed with enthusiasm, a desirable development is hindered by the economic situation. This will be easily understood, when it is realized that a teacher in a "flying brigade" received, in 1927, an annual income of only 9,000 lire, out of which he had to pay his traveling expenses. All of the teachers must therefore do other work, and can give instruction in the "flying brigades" only as an additional occupation. The "flying brigades" are an autonomous institution under the Ministry of National Economy, but are encouraged by the syndicates of agricultural employers and workers. For the use of the "flying brigades" a technical scientific service has been established, and statistical data are placed at the disposition of the teachers. By means of a periodical the central organization keeps in contact with its branches.

In June, 1928, an institution for the development of agrarian technique and propaganda was established and is now at the service of the agricultural workers. It unites all local institutions created for that purpose. A bimonthly

review is published, *The Annals of Agrarian Technique*. The modernization of methods of agricultural production is also encouraged by the teaching of agricultural science in secondary schools, to the children of peasants. For this purpose many teachers are trained in agriculture.

To supplement the work of the syndicates for the benefit of the workers, the fascist Government has created a state institute, entrusted with their physical and intellectual education and with assisting them in other ways. In no other country does a completely similar organization exist. The organization called *Dopolavoro*¹ is engaged in welfare work of the kind found in the Y. M. C. A. in the United States, and including also work similar to that of the "Playground and Recreational Association of America." Most like the Italian organization is the Belgian *Commission Centrale des Loisirs des Ouvriers de l'Hainaut*, but in Belgium the organization operates only in a restricted territory, while in Italy it includes all the more important activities of the same type in the nation.

In Italy the *Dopolavoro* was organized by private initiative after the war. Application of the plan was infrequent and sporadic, and an active campaign was conducted for a wider development. This lasted up to 1923, when the organization recognized the advantage of approaching the syndicates and the possibility of developing with their aid. It was only by the law of May 1, 1925, that the various local institutions were united into the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* under the presidency of the Duke of Aosta. When the latter resigned, the movement was entrusted to Augusto Turati, secretary of the fascist party. Following the establishment of the central *Dopolavoro* several smaller *dopolavoro* organizations were created for the associations of railroad employees and for those engaged in telephone, telegraph and postal services.

¹ As there is no English equivalent of this term and it is used frequently in these pages the author will treat it henceforth as an English word.

Membership in the *Dopolavoro* may be held by institutions pursuing similar aims or by individual persons. To both, admission may be refused on political grounds, and such refusal has actually occurred several times. Nevertheless membership is not refused to the workers who are neither enrolled in the fascist party nor in the syndicates, and in general it may be said that the *Dopolavoro* is rather popular among all classes of the people, as is shown by its steadily increasing membership. In 1926, 1,501 organizations, and 117,124 persons were enrolled; in the first half of 1927, these figures had more than doubled (3,618 and 267,058 respectively) and at the end of the first half of 1928, the number of member organizations was 6,136, and the total number of enrolled persons 751,640. Coöperatives and mutuals may also belong to the *Dopolavoro*.

Membership in the *Dopolavoro* costs very little and it carries with it not only the free use of libraries, but notable reductions in railroad fares and on ships, reductions in the subscription rates to newspapers and periodicals, or in the entrance fees to the theater, the movies and museums, and similar advantages. The reduction on railroads, given to five or more members of the *Dopolavoro* in a group, is thirty per cent.

In addition members may join any sub-group. Four great branches are included in the *Dopolavoro*: instruction, which includes national culture and vocational instruction; artistic education, physical education, and assistance.

In the field of national culture first place is given to the revival of folklore. In addition, with the collaboration of the teachers, special courses are given to illiterates; stenography and typewriting are taught; the sailors are taught foreign languages especially English and Spanish, which they hear most frequently in foreign ports and on board ship. Visits to museums are organized and general conferences

are held of about similar nature to those at the "Syndicate University". Vocational instruction is only given in special subjects; the development of a wider program is left to the state. However, special preparatory and apprenticeship schools have been created for men and women, and the male workers may also follow more advanced courses, which entitle them to become head technicians, construction superintendents, aids to engineers and industrial experts. Other vocational schools have been established for workers in the mining and metal industry, and in the building trades. The workers are taught, for instance, the different ways of preparing and utilizing the Italian woods. Women are instructed in the use of sewing machines, in dress making, cooking and anything else that is necessary for the care of the home and family. In agriculture, in addition to the work of the "flying brigades", arrangements are made for the teaching of specialized production, and even small experimental stations are installed for the benefit of the workers. The Dopolavoro further attempts to carry amusements into the rural districts, by the "flying movies", which have a tendency to counteract the drift from the country.

The section concerned with artistic education has met with very wide success. Schools of elocution have been established for the workers. The technique of stage scenery is taught them and the dopolavoro groups give regular theatrical productions, in which they sometimes have the collaboration of first-class artists. This is undoubtedly an excellent means of diffusing cultural knowledge among the people.

At least as good results are obtained by the music section. The Italians are a musical nation and it is a great advantage for the members of the dopolavoro music groups to receive music and musical instruments at reduced prices. Musical activities themselves are guided: singing lessons are given to the most talented, choral singing is taught, the bands and

orchestras which have always existed in most Italian towns, are encouraged, and contests are arranged between them; concerts are given in which the old Italian popular songs are revived, accompanied by folk dances in the old Italian costumes, which still are worn in some sections of Italy.

For those who give no sign of a special talent, the popular motion pictures and radio sections are maintained. Those who have a certain facility in expressing themselves are encouraged, and prizes are offered for the best novels written by workers.

Physical education has found the widest development. Excursions, popular tours and alpine trips have developed especially rapidly since the reduction in railroad fares. The number of excursions organized by the Dopolavoro increased from 781 in 1927 to 2,152 in the first half of 1928. All sports — gymnastics, rowing, swimming, cycling, boxing, football, fencing—are encouraged by the creation of playing fields and swimming pools. In 1927, thirty-six per cent of all enrolled members belonged to the sports section; in 1928 the percentage increased to fifty-three per cent, and a further development is to be foreseen, since the Italian Government is strongly in favor of all movements which aim at improving the health of the people.

Much has also been done in the field of personal assistance. The Italian employers encourage all plans for better social hygiene, but only since the establishment of the Dopolavoro have the various attempts been placed under single direction. While possibilities exist in this field which may ultimately lead to the scientific organization of industry, at present sanitary propaganda is mainly furthered by means of special publications and by illustrated lectures. Small hospitals are sometimes maintained, and visits are also made to the homes. The physicians, who offer their services to the dopolavoro organizations are not paid, but in exchange they

gain the dopolavorists for their private patients, especially as they treat them at reduced fees. A further advantage for the dopolavorists is the insurance against accidents which may occur during the exercise of their dopolavoro activities. This insurance is the result of a contract, entered into by the central dopolavoro organization with a well known insurance company. Membership in the dopolavoro organization automatically includes the insurance.

But personal assistance is carried further. The construction of reasonably priced houses and restaurants, and the development of industries for the production of economical but beautiful furniture are encouraged, domestic economy is taught, and the movement for the creation and development of gardens is supported. In the agricultural districts regular contests are organized, with premiums for the finest flowers or the most tasty food. All these various activities have the same object in view, namely the creation of sanitary and beautiful homes for the people, and a strong and healthy family spirit. A special section has been added to the various dopolavoro groups, which is reserved for women exclusively. The fact of separate organization for women must be interpreted in the light of the conservative Italian education, which has been developed as a result of the temperament of the people.

The Dopolavoro is open to all workers and office employees. Engineering students are also admitted, because it is hoped that they will be the future organizers of the dopolavoro groups in the factories.

The dopolavoro organization has a central administration, and a technical section, and a special commission is in charge of every branch, wherein specialists of reputation are active. In various provinces smaller dopolavoro centers are maintained; the provinces are divided into special zones, and local dopolavoro groups exist in various municipalities or

even in individual factories. The strength of the movement, in the opinion of the employers, lies in these local organizations, because they really come in contact with large masses of the people. For this reason, the central branch interferes as little as possible in the local work of the organization, limiting its own activities to inspection, and to the organization and preparation of exhibitions, contests and demonstrations, to general propaganda and to the publication of the newspaper, *Dopolavoro*, which has a circulation of 40,000.

That the employers look favorably on the dopolavoro organization, was lately shown by the action of one company, which offered all its employees dopolavoro membership cards as a Christmas present. Presided over by the secretary of the party, the Dopolavoro is a potent means of fascist propaganda, all the more so, because it has no decided political or syndicate aspects. However, it can be restricted to the fascists exclusively, though up to the present this has not occurred. The Dopolavoro is among the most impartial, and hence most universally accepted and supported creations of the fascist Government.

Another Government enterprise that enjoys wide support is the Institute for the Protection of Maternity and Infancy, which was created by the law of December 10, 1925,¹ to integrate all existing schemes and to coördinate and stimulate them. The Institute takes care of the mothers from the period prior to the birth of the baby to the time when the child is three years old, and in some cases follows the child up to its fifteenth or even eighteenth year. Hygienic assistance is given to the mothers and milk is distributed to them. Special attention is paid to unmarried mothers, as these are as a rule the most needy, and they are assured of assistance in the education of their children, so that they may be induced to keep their children with them.

¹ Law of December 10, 1925, no. 2277.

The Institute prefers to aid families with infant children by subsidies, rather than to take the children away and to put them into institutions. This policy is also favored by the creation of day schools for the children. Whenever it is advisable to take the child away from the home because of the moral or physical status of the parents, an attempt is made to place it again in a family, and, if possible, in the country. Only when the child is ill and needs special treatment, is it sent to colonies, for treatment and cure. In this manner 9,000,000 lire were spent in 1927, for the care of tubercular children. Once placed in families, the children are visited from time to time, so as to ascertain whether they are well taken care of. When the children grow up in the country and show no liking for farming, they may go into the city where they are taught an occupation.

The Institute is financed by the state, but some contributions are made by the communities, and sometimes by the families to which the children belong. The Institute also proposes to make such persons as help it by generous gifts honorary members; but this plan, it seems, has not been realized. The expenses of the Institute are steadily growing and will continue to do so for a number of years to come. Further improvements in the service are still necessary: fifty ambulances have been bought and fifty more will be acquired. The children placed in families cost the Institute the same sum each year, but their number steadily increases. Until the first child so placed reaches the age of eighteen, no reduction in these expenses will be possible. In 1927 the Institute placed 2,450 children in families or trade schools, and spent 3,800,000 lire for this purpose. In the first half of 1928, it placed 6,200 children, at a cost of 16,000,000 lire. 10,000,000 lire were given for subsidies to mothers. Medicines and nourishment were distributed, and 50,000 persons were visited in their homes in the first half of 1928. For the

families who kept their children and for day schools, 2,000,000 lire were spent in the first half of 1928. Further sums were spent to fight infant mortality. To Italian mothers abroad, payment of the expenses of the trip to their home country and back is offered, so that their children may be born on Italian soil. Advantage is frequently taken of this policy by Italian mothers in France. In view of all these expenses, it is understandable that Mussolini, in March, 1929, announced that the Government had spent in 1928 79,000,000 lire for the protection of maternity and infancy, of which only 2.50 per cent were expenses for the maintenance of offices, salaries, etc.

The Institute is assisted in its work by the Labor Inspection Department, which informs it of needy cases, and by the feminine fascist organizations. It has no direct connection with the syndicates so far, but should the latter take the initiative, the Institute would welcome the connection. Although, as in the case of the Dopolavoro, the best work is done by the branches, the organization is strictly fascist; no child can be placed in a family without the approval of the president of the provincial branch, and still it is difficult to create a really efficient service, for in too many cases the assistance of the Institute takes the form of charity, or assistance is given when not really needed.

But as the Institute each year enlarges its sphere of activities, it also tries to organize more efficiently. Even now the Institute does its share to dispose the people favorably to fascism. It has also the effect in the long run of gaining the young elements for fascism, for from the care of the Institute the boy passes into the fascist boy-scouts organization, *Balilla*, from there into the military youth organization *Avanguardista*, and after reaching his majority, he naturally enters the fascist party, influenced by the ideas on which his education has been based.

CHAPTER VIII

STRIKES, THE LABOR COURT AND INDIVIDUAL LABOR CONTROVERSIES

THE fascists consider the strike an illegitimate weapon of self-defense, and an offense against the public because it interrupts production. The same applies to lockouts. The existence of a labor court is said to ensure just settlement of all controversies, and satisfaction of the legitimate demands of wage-earners. Hence, considering labor as a social duty, the government arrives logically at the prohibition of strikes and lockouts.

The law of April 3, 1926, provides that the closing of factories and offices by the employers without a justifiable reason, and for the sole purpose of forcing the employees to accept conditions less advantageous than those stipulated in a collective contract, is punishable by a fine of from 10,000 to 100,000 lire for each employer. Employees, supporting strikes that aim at a change in collective labor agreements in their favor, are subject to fines of from 100 to 1,000 lire, while the leaders of strikes are still more severely punished, by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than two years, in addition to the prescribed fine. A strike is defined for this purpose as a cessation of work by groups of three or more, an extremely broad definition. The performance of one's task in an irregular or discontinuous manner, so as to disturb the smooth working of the enterprise, for reasons similar to those mentioned above, is considered as equivalent to a strike, and the same penalties apply.

Such an absolute outlawry of strikes does not exist in many countries, but attempts have been made frequently to

eliminate strikes in utility enterprises, where the welfare of the general public is affected. The fascists recognize these strikes as especially serious, and the law of April 3, 1926, imposes more severe penalties for them than for ordinary stoppages. In case of strikes on the part of employees of public utility enterprises, the participants are punished by penitentiary sentences for from one to six months, and are barred from public offices for six months, while the leaders are condemned to penal servitude of from six months to two years, and are barred from public offices for at least three years. The same provisions apply when strikes occur among employees of the state or other governmental enterprises, as such manifestations are directed against the state itself. Moreover, the administrators or owners of public utility enterprises are subject to punishment for unjustified suspension of work, consisting of a fine of from 5,000 to 100,000 lire in addition to penal servitude for from six months to one year, and temporary exclusion from public offices. In case their action results in public danger, the term in the penitentiary is extended to at least one year and should the death of a person ensue from their action, to 3 years. The Government adopted these severe measures in view of Italy's experience in the immediate post-war years, when the public frequently was at the absolute mercy of the workers.

It has also been recognized that the importance of a strike does not depend exclusively upon the number of strikers, but also upon the number of those who sympathize with the movement and do nothing to prevent their fellow laborers from abandoning work. Therefore it has been declared that it is the duty of those administrators and workers in governmental and public utility enterprises, who do not participate in the strike, to do all in their power to restore regular routine, failure to do so being punishable with imprisonment for from one to six months.

To ensure just enforcement of these provisions, the Minister of Corporations determines by decree what enterprises are regarded as public utility enterprises, and the municipalities post each year, for a period of fifteen days, the list of public utility enterprises operating in the district, so that within the succeeding two weeks any person may protest against the inclusion or omission of any enterprise. Decision rests with the prefect, who approves the final list and has it published in the official provincial announcements. In all cases the services of physicians and other medical personnel, of lawyers, attorneys, notaries, engineers, architects, surveyors and scientific agriculturalists are regarded as of public character. Here again the law has been criticized as too severe, for it is, indeed, the first time that the services of land surveyors and architects have been included among public utilities, and it is hard to understand how the public would be seriously inconvenienced by a strike of one of these groups.

The fascists have eliminated economic strikes in order to protect production, but they have also outlawed political strikes, because "any increase in a nation's prestige is proportional to the discipline it displays internally".¹ The opponents of the Government say that the political strikes are severely punished in order to suppress them completely, for the fascists are afraid of uncontrolled popular demonstrations which might easily turn against them. This risk would be especially great when the workers are dissatisfied with a decision of one of the labor courts, or when workers do not approve of the manner in which the proceedings are carried on. Hence strikes, organized for the purpose of influencing the decisions of the judges of the labor courts or of any other public officers, are made punishable by penitentiary sentence of from one to three years, and temporary disbarment of

¹ Speech of Mussolini in the Chamber of Deputies, November 16, 1922.

the participants from public office, while the promoters of such strikes are punishable by penal servitude for from three to seven years and the permanent loss of the right to hold public office. Similarly, persons refusing to abide by the decisions of the labor courts, are subject to imprisonment for from one month to one year, and a fine of from one hundred to five thousand lire, besides being civilly responsible for the failure to execute the decision. Should such refusal be made by the officials of legally recognized associations, they are dismissed from office and punished by fines of from 2,000 to 10,000 lire and imprisonment for from six months to two years.

The foregoing regulations have been criticized as follows: when the right to strike, for which the laborer has fought during the last one hundred and fifty years is denied him, he is deprived of his most effective weapon, which at the same time serves as a measure of strength for the opposing sides. In fact, it will be impossible to eliminate strikes completely, or, at any rate, the sentiments of discontent which are shown by strikes will seek other means of expression.

There is, indeed, a factual ground for this opinion. Notwithstanding the severe punishments and the control exercised by the syndicates, several strikes have occurred, especially in the province of Veneto. The decisions of the courts in these cases have by no means been uniform: in November, 1927, the workers of the company *De Angelis e Frua*, of Legnano, entered into a strike against a reduction of twenty-five per cent in the cost-of-living bonus. They were originally sentenced to pay 100 lire each, but they were acquitted when they presented their appeal, because the strike, in the opinion of the judges, had been spontaneous and was not the result of a previous agreement.

Yet the court in Rome sentenced five laborers, working on the land reclamation at Maccarese, because they had pro-

tested by a strike against the dismissal of a fellow worker. Although it is recognized that, at times, the workers have unfairly imposed their will on employers, yet it may not be a wise policy to suppress all expressions of solidarity between them. People are only slowly educated to support one another's interests, and where this occurs, it should not be punished, for the destructive effects of such action may be greater than the advantages obtained by the suppression of a strike.

In January, 1928, a decision was handed down by the judges in Vigevano, absolving from guilt the workers who had engaged in a strike to obtain enforcement of a collective contract. In contradiction to the opinion, which the Minister of Justice, Rocco, held, when he discussed the law, the judges maintained that it is not the workers who must be punished, if they engage in a strike to have a collective contract respected, but the employer who violated it.

In Sicily thirty-four wage-earners of Riesi abandoned work in the Tallarita mine to obtain a different labor contract. The Court of Cassations, in May, 1928, acquitted the workers and the leaders of the strike, but the Court of Appeals in Palermo, on appeal by the attorney general of that city, sentenced them in March, 1929, to a fine of two hundred lire each, except for two who were dismissed for lack of evidence.

These cases show that strikes have occurred and continue to occur since the passage of the Rocco Law, but as they do not become generally known in Italy, they merely have a local importance and cannot spread to other provinces. Hence the strike no longer presents an index adequately reflecting the feelings of the workers. The opponents of the Government say, that such strikes would be much more frequent, were it not for the severe control by the fascists, and it is certainly true that because of this control the number is greatly re-

duced. On the other hand, some importance must be given to the argument that the workers are tired of the continuous interruptions of work and desire tranquility and steadiness of employment.

But when the workers are dissatisfied and cannot evidence their feelings by means of a strike, they seek and find other means of expressing their attitude, such as a momentary arrestation of the machines, as occurred for instance at the Fiat automobile factory in Turin, or abstention from fascist demonstrations. At the time when Giampaoli was mayor of Milan, he was once asked by one of the largest enterprises in the city to address the workers. When he entered he was received by an embarrassing silence, which continued throughout his speech, although the mayor, irritated by this obviously hostile attitude on the part of his audience, attacked the laborers quite violently. Without any applause, but also without any other demonstration, the 3,000 workers left the hall in absolute discipline and glacial silence at the end of his speech. Whether this act was directed against the mayor personally, or against fascism in general, it pictured for those who heard of it, the attitude of the laboring masses at least just as effectively as any strike would have done.

The number of strikes is certainly greatly reduced, and lockouts have never occurred, for the employers resort rather to a reduction in output, part-time work and similar measures. It is difficult for a court to condemn such a policy, as it may be the result of strained economic conditions, as well as a means of controlling the workers. Thus, for instance, the Court of Cassations acquitted the directors of a factory in Comido, who had closed the establishment because of a business crisis.

Because of such decisions it is often claimed that the capitalists are favored in the fascist regime, but the employers object that the creation of a labor court, restricting

their industrial freedom, represents a concession to the workers, which they have only accepted because it ensures steady production. Although the former president of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, Rossoni, regards the creation of a labor court as a great step forward, his opponents in the labor field maintain that it amounts to little more than a farce, for the court must decide according to the orders of the Government. This is not only because they lack laws to guide them in passing sentence, and reliance on the Government is the easiest way out, but also because they cannot make any decision which displeases the Government, in view of the "law on the dismissal of state employees," which may be enforced whenever state employees—and the judges are specifically included—"place themselves in a position of incompatibility with the general political tendencies of the Government by manifestations in or out of office."

But it is probably not due so much to lack of confidence in the decisions of the labor courts, that so few cases have been presented, as to the fact that most differences of opinion are settled without resorting to the courts, either by special conciliation commissions, like those provided for in agricultural collective contracts, or by the intervention of the Ministry of Corporations. Moreover, the presidents of the labor courts must make a final attempt at conciliation before hearing the case in court.

There are sixteen courts of appeal in Italy, each with a special section constituting a labor court, formed of three magistrates of the court of appeals, one of whom shall be president of the labor court, and of two citizens, competent in matters of production and labor. Refusal of magistrates or experts to serve in a labor court is unlawful.

The citizen experts are chosen from a list classified into groups and subgroups according to the various kinds of

enterprises under the jurisdiction of the labor court, which has been prepared by the provincial council of national economy and is transmitted to the court of appeals after the central corporate bodies have approved or amended it. From this list the president of the court of appeals, after consultation with the president of the labor court, selects the citizens to be included in the final list. This list is publicly posted at the court of appeals, and at the prefecture, whereupon, within the two succeeding weeks, any syndicate may file a protest against it. The protest is sent to all those interested and is disposed of by the court of appeals, after examining the arguments of the interested parties.

No person may be included in the list who is not an Italian citizen having attained the age of twenty-five, who is not of good moral and political standing, and who does not hold a university degree or its equivalent, so that a guarantee of competence is given. The president of the court of appeals may consider exceptional skill in an art or profession to be equivalent to a university degree, but must, when he orders such persons to be included in the list of experts, state the reasons for his decision. Employees of the state or other public organizations, fulfilling the prescribed regulations, may also be selected.

The list of citizen experts may be revised biennially, in which case the above regulations equally apply. From the thus determined general list, the president of the court of appeals, selects each year after consultation with the president of the labor court, the persons who may be called upon to act as expert counsellors, and the president of the labor court appoints among these, whenever a dispute is submitted, the experts best qualified to judge the case. They may not be directly or indirectly interested in the controversy. Should the president of the labor court desire to have persons not included in his list, appointed as experts, he may request the

president of the court of appeals to select such persons from the general list, or, in exceptional cases and with the consent of all parties, even persons not named in the general list may be appointed.

Here again criticism is advanced, not so much because the experts will be chosen from among fascists, for this is only of slight importance in view of the fact that the only associations which can invoke the decision of the court are those legally recognized and hence also fascist, but it has been pointed out that the provincial councils of national economy are mostly composed of employers and hence, although they are not directly interested in the controversy, they will nevertheless represent one of the parties in the case. Therefore some think that they should be attached to the court only as counsellors and should not have a vote in deciding the controversy. Others say that it is of great importance for the counsellors to be regular judges, for the other judges are not able to evaluate economic questions adequately and in this manner the experts at least can insist upon their point of view up to the final decision.

When the court decides according to equity, it can do so only on the ground of the documents presented. If the parties fail to agree in regard to such factors as the cost of production, the output or the selling price, the court can ascertain the true situation only by the testimony of experts not interested in the matter, and by cross-examination. The decision is rendered for a specific period of time, stated in the sentence, which is usually equal to the time for which similar collective contracts are concluded.

Only legally recognized associations are allowed to appear before the court. Hence, when an action is started against an extra-legal association as, for example, an organization of public utility employees, or one not including a sufficient number of workers engaged in that kind of work, or when

it is undertaken against an unorganized group of persons, that association or group, although it may plead, is represented by a special commissioner appointed by the president of the court of appeals. Whenever possible he is chosen from among the interested employers or employees. However, he must give evidence of his good moral and political character. The persons so selected cannot reject the position under penalty of compensation for losses resulting therefrom.

Judgment of the labor court on any labor controversy may also be requested by the Ministry of Public Works, should it be deemed necessary in the interest of the public. In such cases the interested parties may plead in the proceedings. Higher grade associations, interested in the controversies of lower grade associations, may also plead, and vice versa. If the dispute is presented by the organizations, the Ministry is informed and has the right to intervene. No decisions are rendered before its oral opinion has been heard by the labor court. The legally recognized associations are represented in the proceedings by their secretary or president or by a special attorney. They may be assisted by not more than one lawyer, and by any number of expert advisers not deemed excessive by the magistrate. The personal appearance of the disputing parties may be ordered at any time during the proceedings. If both parties fail to appear at any of the meetings, the case is dropped, unless the Ministry of Public Works demands the prosecution of the defaulting parties. If only the plaintiff or the defendant appears, the case is heard by default of the other, but a party appearing at a later part of the hearing, may state his points and conclusions. This, however, does not affect the sentences and ordinances already pronounced in the proceedings. Thereby a speedier trial is rendered possible, but this clause also lends itself to abuse, for a party may be prevented in an

illegal manner from reaching the court at the determined time, and such a situation should not carry disadvantageous results.

Legal action is started by an association upon the presentation of a petition signed either by the representative of the association or its attorney, which must include a statement of the reasons why jurisdiction is requested and the objects of such action. The same rule holds true for the statements of the Ministry of Public Works. All petitions are immediately transmitted to the president of the labor court who, within twenty-four hours, must decide on the date of the hearing at which the parties are to appear, and the period within which the defendant must submit his reply. In case the judgment is requested by a non-recognized organization, he must nominate the special representative of that association.

A copy of the appeal, containing also the order to appear, is immediately transmitted officially to the interested parties and to the Ministry and eventually to the special representative. Arrival of such documents at their destination is ensured, as they are sent by registered mail with return receipt. Furthermore an extract of the document is published free of charge in the provincial *Journal of Judicial Announcements*, or in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, so that the general public may be informed of the case.

The parties appear through the intervention of the Ministry before the president of the labor court on the day of the hearing, when the plaintiff and the pleading parties, if any, must state whether they insist on their demands, and give their opinions on the right of the defendant and on the preparation of the trial. In its defense the interested party states whether it yields to the demands of its adversary, and must express its opinion on the legal right of the plaintiff, on the jurisdiction of the magistrates, and on all questions

concerning the preparation of the trial. Thereby the parties are given an opportunity to express their opinions on the competence of the opponents or of the court, but if opinions on these subjects are not offered at the first meeting, they may not be given later, unless the questions are raised officially by the judge.

After having heard the parties the president of the labor court must attempt a reconciliation, which settlement, if successful, is recorded in the minutes and takes the place of a collective contract. If the parties continue to disagree, the president decides upon the date on which they are to appear before the assembled labor court, which must not be ten days later than the first hearing and he appoints the court reporter. Within the following three days the parties must file their written arguments, which may omit previously mentioned points, but cannot expand or modify the demands. Copies of such arguments are sent to all interested parties and to the Ministry of Public Works.

At the hearing before the labor court, the reporter, the parties and the Ministry of Public Works present the case, whereupon the court decides whether the opinions of which statement is permitted at the first meeting only have been duly expressed, and determines and orders all measures necessary for the study of the case. This includes a request for the presentation of additional documents and the appointment of whatever technical consultants are necessary because of the complexity of the case. The examination of witnesses may be made by the court, or by any of its representatives designated for that purpose, and must be attended by the Ministry.

Should no special study be required, the court immediately makes a decision, which is read at a public hearing. Should one meeting prove insufficient for arriving at a decision, additional meetings are held in the near future, but no other delays are permitted, as a speedy trial is required.

The parties must file their arguments within five days after the completion of the study, and the documents are sent immediately to the other party and the Ministry of Public Works. Five days later a new session is held, at which, after hearing the parties and the Ministry of Public Works, the court decides the case, issuing a brief sentence with explanation. The original copy of the sentence, signed by the judges and the chancellor, must be deposited at the chancery within the two weeks following the judgment. Other copies are sent to all parties concerned and to the Ministry of Public Works, and one is filed and published in the manner prescribed for collective contracts.

In case judgment has been rendered on a collective labor controversy in conflict with an earlier decision of the court on individual labor relations, the parties or the Ministry of Public Works may request its annulment, the same applying when the sentence is incompatible with a collective contract or a judgment definitely accepted by the court. Upon the revocation of its decision, the labor court issues a new sentence.

The final sentence of a labor court may be appealed by any party or by the Ministry of Public Works within fifteen days to the Court of Cassations, whose judgment is final. The attorney general of the Court of Cassations also may intervene in regard to the sentence, if he considers it in conflict with the law.

The Ministry of Public Works, being subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, a ministerial decree from the latter may likewise authorize the attorney general of the Court of Cassations to take charge and coordinate the action of the Ministry of Public Works in regard to a decision of the labor court. He must report his observations and suggestions to the Minister of Justice and is responsible to him.

The legally recognized associations are held responsible

for the application and execution of the decisions. However, the Ministry of Public Works or an interested party may demand that the magistrate revise the sentence before its period of application has expired, in case of a significant change in conditions. To prevent continued requests to the court for the modification of its decisions, the complaining party is made subject to a fine up to 10,000 lire whenever the demand is rejected.

The first case brought before a labor court related to wages to be paid to the workers in the rice fields of the Po Valley. On March 16, 1927, a collective contract had been agreed upon by the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, represented by Rossoni, and by the Confederation of Agriculturalists, whose president is Gino Cacciari. The contract had fixed the daily remuneration of a rice worker at from 17 to 18.90 lire according to the different provinces, and at 19.50 lire for those workers coming from other parts of Italy. This meant a reduction of over ten per cent on the wages previously paid, conceded in consideration of the agricultural crisis, or of 1.50 lire for the local workers and of 3 lire for those who had migrated.

After the conclusion of this agreement the price of rice continued to fall, this being due partly to such temporary reasons as the crisis resulting from the revaluation of the lire, and the sale of large quantities of rice which had been held in storage, but also to an ineradicable permanent cause, namely the reduction in the price of rice in the world market. Therefore the provinces of Vercelli, Pavia, Novarra and Milan asked for a further reduction of over thirty per cent in the rates of wages, and, as the local labor syndicates naturally refused, they requested the president of their Confederation, Cacciari, in a letter dated May 24, 1927, to draw up a new contract providing for a daily compensation of 14 lire to all rice workers. Rossoni declined this proposal, and,

after the Ministry of Corporations had failed on June 7, 1927, to conciliate the parties, he requested that the Labor Court should decide the case. Hence, on June 28, Cacciari presented the request, whereupon the two experts were appointed in the persons of the director-general of agriculture at the Ministry of National Economy, who was later replaced by another person, and of the director of the "flying brigade" in Rome.

In the meantime the local organizations of employers and workers had decided that the sums in dispute should not be included in the wages paid, but should be deposited in a bank or with the local authorities, until the Labor Court decided the case. This provision was carried out, although the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates never approved of it.

On July 14, the first meeting took place and the Minister of Public Works himself attended. The president of the Labor Court made a last attempt at conciliation which met with no success. However, Rossoni offered a final reduction of 0.60 lire which represented a further reduction of ten per cent for the local workers and of fifteen for those of other provinces, but Cacciari insisted on a reduction of twenty per cent.

The president of the Labor Court himself discussed the case. Then the lawyer of the employers' confederation explained that conditions had so changed as to justify the demands of the agriculturalists, while the lawyer of the opposing party pointed out that the crisis had been taken into account when the contract of March 16, 1927, had been drawn up and that it was not just to inflict a further reduction on the rice workers alone. After the technical consultant of the Confederation of Agriculturalists had spoken, Rossoni added that collective contracts cannot and should not be changed from month to month and declared that a judgment of the Labor Court, unfavorable for the workers,

would be dangerous, for it would imply the possibility of revision of all collective contracts in existence.

Finally the Ministry of Public Works presented its opinion. It declared that a considerable change had taken place since the month of March, and that, although the crisis had existed before, it had become more acute and more serious after the conclusion of the contract. Nevertheless the workers should not bear the results of this situation alone, especially since the cost of living had not decreased for the laboring masses.

On the basis of the opinions expressed and the data presented, the court decided on the same day, July 28, 1927:

The court, pronouncing on the request presented by the Confederation of Agriculturalists in the person of its president Gino Cacciari, against the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates in the person of its president Edmondo Rossoni, for the reduction of wages agreed upon in the collective labor contract of March 16, 1927, for the rice workers in the provinces of Vercelli, Novarra, Pavia and Milan . . . reduces the daily wages established in said contract for the above enumerated provinces by 0.60 lire for all groups of rice workers, beginning June 7, 1927 [the day on which the attempt at conciliation by the Ministry of Corporations had failed] up to the end of the work in the rice fields, with the consequent obligation of reimbursement by the workers of the additional sums obtained since that day. . . .

As it will be noticed the decision of the court coincides with the final reduction which Rossoni had proposed. The court had demonstrated that it was able to examine economic questions, it had made an intelligent study of the causes of the agricultural crisis, separating the temporary from the permanent ones, and it had taken all points into consideration. When Rossoni pointed out that the contract had been neither duly deposited nor published, the court upheld the legal

validity of the contract but declared that observance of the contract could not be demanded from non-members of the confederation concerned, before its publication, but that these considerations were of no special importance in the case.

It may be said that the conflict which was presented to the court in this case was not difficult to solve, and that therefore it was not representative, but at the end of the year the court was asked to decide under more complicated conditions.

On June 22, 1927, the National Fascist Confederation of Maritime and Aerial Transportation Enterprises, represented by its president, Dionigi Biancardi, had concluded a collective contract for half a year with the autonomous Fascist Federation of those Employed in Maritime and Aerial Transportation Enterprises, the special commissioner of which was Ignio Magrini. At that time Magrini had consented to a reduction of wages because of the revaluation of the lire and a simultaneous fall in the cost of living. In December, the employers asked for a further reduction, but the parties could not arrive at an agreement, when they met on December 22, 1927, at the Ministry of Communications under the presidency of Ciano. Notwithstanding the attempt at conciliation made by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Corporations, Bottai, they jointly submitted the case to the Labor Court on the following day. Once again it was the court in Rome, so that the same president and the same regular judges were called upon to decide. The head of the division of general direction of the merchant marine, and the director of the Institute for Exportation were nominated experts.

While the case was pending, the wages remained the same, on decision of Minister Ciano, but the Seamen's Federation had promised to pay the sum in question at its own expense, should the decision of the court be adverse. The trial was held in the month of January. On the 3rd day of that month,

the president of the Labor Court made the required attempt at conciliation without result. On January 13, 1928, a hearing was held at which Biancardi and Magrini respectively explained their points of view. The next meeting, arranged for January 18, was postponed to ten days later, because Magrini requested the presentation of additional documents, which had to be prepared by the Ministry of Communications. On that day, January 28, 1928, the sentence was delivered, the provisions of which were to be applied from January 1, 1928.

The dispute included the following points: The employers demanded a reduction of wages on an average of from twenty to twenty-eight per cent for the sailors on freight steamers, basing the discriminatory request on the common agreement of the organizations, expressed in the collective contract of March 22, 1927, to eliminate the differences in pay to the personnel of the freight and the passenger steamers. It proposed a slightly lower reduction for the officers of freight steamers, but these had refused to accept better treatment than the common sailors. The new contract was to be enforced for half a year.

Against this stood the offer of Magrini. He consented to a reduction of eight per cent for the officers and employees without families employed on passenger ships and those carrying passengers and freight, and of five per cent for the sailors on all ships, of three per cent for the officers on freight steamers and an additional reduction of 15 lire a month for the sailors on passenger ships and those carrying passengers and freight, which would put the employees of the freight and passenger service on the same footing. Magrini later regretted having offered these concessions, but, although he could not refuse them, he declared that it would be better to have no reductions at all, in view of the low standard of living of the sailors' families. Magrini would have

preferred to have the decision of the court settle the question for an entire year.

The two parties did not agree on the value of Magrini's proposal. The employers pointed out that the reduction for the sailors without families had almost no value, because the great majority of the personnel were married, nor was it wise to accept such a proposition for it would invariably lead to the preferential employment of the unmarried, which was not in line with the general policy of the Government.

Special points were bitterly debated. The two parties arrived at different results when comparing the economic status of the sailors during the post-war period with the standard of living before the war, and when comparing it with the economic situation of the Italian laborers on land, and of the sailors of other nations. Nor did the parties seem to agree on the general cost of living, for Magrini denied that the index numbers adequately represented the situation. They argued on the economic situation in which the merchant marine found itself. The employers maintained that they were struggling with great difficulties, while their opponents held that the Italian merchant marine was so prosperous and successful as to present serious competition to that of other nations. The employers wished to apply the decision that the central intersyndicate committee had made for other industries. Magrini objected that reductions in wages must be decided upon case by case according to the special conditions, and further that the central intersyndicate committee had decided that a reduction in wages should go hand in hand with an increase in the hours of work, so as to allow the worker about the same income as before. This was not possible in the case of the sailors. Finally the parties disagreed on the importance of the reductions proposed by the maritime Confederation.

The Ministry of Public Works recognized that the em-

ployers were in a difficult position, but expressed confidence that they were animated by a high spirit of sacrifice. It decided that the economic status of the sailors at the moment of the controversy was above that of the pre-war period, but that this was no reason to return to an indecently low level, especially since the sailors in other nations, Yugoslavia excepted, were in a better situation. It agreed with Magrini that the decisions of the central intersyndicate committee should not be applied to any other industry without modifications, and, taking into consideration the increase in the cost of living, decided that the reductions requested by the employers could not be accepted and that the possible reductions would be so negligible as to offend the dignity of that party. Therefore the Court should decide that wages were to remain the same for the first six months of 1928.

After three hours of consultation among the judges, the sentence was pronounced:

The court . . . determines:

1. That, taking effect from January 1, 1928, the pay and all other compensation to the personnel (a) of the ranks of the freight steamers, (b) of the officers of the freight steamers, (c) of the officers of passenger ships and those carrying passengers and freight, (d) of the employees of the ship companies of passenger and freight and passenger steamers, shall be maintained in the same manner as on December 30, 1927.

2. That, in order to equalize the pay of the lowest grade workers on the freight steamers with that on the passenger and freight and passenger steamers, from the same date of January 1, 1928, the pay and other compensation as on December 31, 1927, shall be reduced by fifteen lire for the sailors of the freight steamers, and proportionally more or less for the other groups.

3. That the above mentioned conditions shall be in force until June 30, 1928, and are understood to be renewed silently every half year. . . .

Considering that Magrini had himself offered a reduction of fifteen per cent for sailors of the freight steamers, and that he had consented to even further reductions, although he later regretted it, it must be recognized that he was correct in declaring that the Labor Court had decided in favor of the workers. He issued the following communication to the seamen: "Sailors, the Labor Court has done you justice! Long live the regime! Long live the Duce! And now sailors, to work for the prosperity of the Italian merchant marine! Keep your spirits up!"

In neither of the cases is there any justification for saying—as some do—that the Labor Court has opposed the workers. Especially in the latter controversy the employers' demands were refused outright, so much so that this decision as well as the first has been widely and severely criticized in capitalist circles. However, Benni, the president of the Confederation of Italian Industry, maintains that there is no reason for complaint, and that on the contrary it is an advantage that the court agreed with the workers in the first two disputes, for only as a result of such sentences would the workers have gained confidence in it.

It still remains an open question whether the judges decided the controversy according to their own judgment or upon the suggestion of the Government, but it seems that they have arrived independently at their conclusions, for their decisions do not follow completely the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Works, which presents the governmental point of view. In general the courts are looked upon as impartial and are at present esteemed also by the industrialists. It is probably the belief in the independence of the court, and the fear of each side that the decision may be against it, which induce both employers and wage-earners to strive for conciliation in most cases, rather than to submit their disputes to the labor courts. Nevertheless it is recog-

nized that there is no guarantee that in the future no pressure will be brought to bear on the judges, as that possibility certainly exists.

This explains why so few cases have been presented for decision to the labor courts, for only minor cases have been presented in addition to the two discussed. Thus, for example, the Labor Court at Rome was requested in July, 1928, to decide on the labor conditions of the janitors, because their syndicate could not conclude a collective contract with the house owners, since the latter were not united into a legally recognized association.

It is probable that the action of the courts will be invoked more frequently for individual labor controversies. By the decree of February 26, 1928,¹ it was established that the regular court should deal with individual labor controversies, but that two experts, one an employer and one a worker, should act as counsellors. They are to be chosen each time by agreement between the parties from suitable lists, compiled on proposal of the various associations by the labor and social welfare section of the provincial councils of economy. They may not hold any office in the syndicates or belong to the group of experts designated for the Labor Court, and they must not be in a state of bankruptcy or otherwise objectionable, nor may they in any way be interested in the controversy, or have had a legal dispute with one of the parties. The list is approved by a decree of the president of the Labor Court. A person may refuse to serve as an expert, but if this refusal is declared unjustified by the district judge or by the court, he is liable to a fine of 500 lire.

Cases dealing with sums up to 5,000 lire are decided by the district judge, while more important ones are brought before the ordinary court. The latter serves also as a court

¹ *Royal Decree* of February 26, 1928, no. 471.

of appeals against the sentence of the district judge, unless the case is not appealable because the sum in question amounts to less than 2,000 lire. In the maritime field jurisdiction devolves upon the port authorities.

The decisions of the ordinary court may be appealed to the Labor Court within fifteen days. The interested parties are represented by their syndicates, but they may ask to plead personally, or the judge may request their appearance. The case is postponed if a similar collective labor controversy has already been submitted to the Labor Court, until the decision of the latter is handed down. In urgent cases the district judge or the president of the court may by decree liberate a poor person from the immediate expenses. In disputes, involving less than 2,000 lire, the condemned party is not obliged to pay the lawyer of the other side. All other provisions are similar to those for collective labor controversies. The decree further establishes a fine for the non-application of collective contracts or standards set up by the corporations, which amounts to from 100 to 5,000 lire and which may also be imposed on the employer, when he pays wages lower than those decided upon in a collective contract.

The provisions of the decree for the settlement of individual labor conflicts, came into force on October 1, 1928, and only on March 1, 1929, did the temporary measures come to an end. It is, therefore, too early to give an opinion on the working of the law.

CHAPTER IX

DIFFICULTIES WITHIN THE FASCIST SYNDICATE SYSTEM

QUITE apart from the opposition of enemies, or of persons adhering to other political conceptions, the carrying out of the fascist syndicate program is hampered by difficulties arising from within. Perhaps it is because of the mentality that has been developed and accentuated for a hundred years and more, perhaps it is because it lies in the nature of things, that the class struggle, the struggle of the property-holding classes against those who can offer only their labor in the productive process, again springs up in the fascist regime. The fascists strive to create a new attitude of coöperation, but the older generation, due to different training or greater experience, does not believe in the creation of a new social order. Moreover, although the Government was supported in its first effort because in the difficult moments of crisis something had to be done, when the minds and the life of the people were again calm, the old points of view once more made themselves felt. At present their expressions are disciplined, even suppressed; still the feeling is there, and the fascists, the Government, know that it exists. They trust that finally both sides will recognize that to work in peace is to the common advantage. They are willing to do everything to prepare the way, to urge the people in this direction, even to force them, but they realize that though they can dominate the situation at any moment by force, they cannot create a new civilization, a new social order in that fashion. Notwithstanding their actual practice, they know very well that they can use force to compel a single, narrow-minded

individual who is opposed to what the more enlightened members of his class have accepted as advantageous and necessary in the general interest, but that they cannot coerce an entire economic group, unless they resort to drastic measures like those adopted at the time of the Russian revolution. An evolutionary process will always be slow, opinion will stand against opinion, and when economic interests are involved, the struggle will be bitter even if the state puts the weight of its influence on one side. The policy of land reclamation is an example of an obstinate opposition of the land owners to the plans of the Government, and their point of view is comprehensible, for they alone pay for an advantage which is not personal, but accrues to the entire country. The spirit of sacrifice for the general interest of the community is nowhere very widespread, and when the state, putting into practice the fascist doctrine of its superiority over individuals, compels citizens to follow its orders, they turn against the state in violent criticism.

Still more bitter is the criticism when the advantages are only in the final instance enjoyed by the general public, and first of all by a special class, the laboring class. This situation occurred in the case of the "tax in workers", when the agriculturalists were forced to have special work done which was of almost no value to them, and compelled to expend their small capital for wages in an extremely difficult economic period, in order to reduce the distress among the laborers. Even the journal of the agricultural workers stated:

It is not denied that a large part of the work which [the agriculturalists] are compelled to carry out is of little or no utility, but it is held by the labor organizers that many other undertakings are to be qualified as economical, and correspond to the interest of agriculture and society. This is true in the case of the improvement of the meadows, the work of land

reclamation, etc. The "tax in workers" is in itself in many cases anti-economic, but one cannot do without it.¹

To this frank statement, which shows that the workers, or at least their leaders, are conscious of the financial burden which they impose upon the capitalist class, the following passage must be added: "The compulsion attains its aim in great part—it greatly diminishes unemployment and at the same time, due to the revolving plan by which the choice of the workers is regulated, prevents the same persons from always remaining without work."²

It is understandable and perhaps justified that the state, in the name of the workers, should oblige the agricultural employers to furnish a certain number of workers with an occupation in moments of general unemployment, but such policy should not become anti-economic. The labor leaders themselves recognize that this "tax in workers" should not constitute a strain and should only be applied in the richer provinces of Northern Italy. On the other hand the fascist organization of agriculturalists has accepted the idea in principle, but criticises the way in which it is carried out.

At present the agricultural technicians are united with the agricultural workers in the same Confederation of Agriculture. The employers claim that as long as the technicians are under the leadership of the very organization which is entrusted with the guardianship of the workers' interests they cannot be impartial. They will always tend to favor the workers; when wages are concerned, they will be compelled to do so, if not directly, then by all sorts of personal considerations. Hence, they maintain, an independent organization of agricultural technicians or their incorporation into the association of intellectual workers is imperative for the just

¹ *Il Lavoro d'Italia Agricola*, August, 1927.

² *Ibid.*

application of the "tax in workers". To this the president of the Confederation of Agriculture objects that the technicians several times expressed their desire to remain united with the workers and that it would be unwise to include the association of agricultural technicians in the Confederation of Intellectuals, for they really do not belong to that class; their skill does not consist in theoretical work, but in its practical application. They should be regarded therefore as a special kind of workers. Abandoned to themselves they would lose all advantages which they had obtained since their incorporation in the workers' confederation. They could not unite with the agricultural employers either for this would reverse the situation to the disadvantage of the workers who are already, by their very nature, the weaker party, and this would also be unfavorable to the technicians themselves, for, although they might conclude collective contracts with the employers in the same manner as pacts are drawn up by the industrialists with the executives of their enterprises, their interests would not be properly defended. Furthermore, the technicians, who are in duty bound to report the negligent cultivation of any property, would not dare to do so for fear of losing their jobs, should their association be under the authority of the Confederation of Agriculturalists, and even if they did so, the report would be ineffective.

The employers' confederation believes that it will be possible to make the Confederation of Agriculture a true workers' organization only when the latter is compelled to change its name to Confederation of Agricultural Workers. It could then be justifiably claimed that the technicians should not belong to the association, nor the *mezzadri* and the small landed proprietors, who are also united with the agricultural workers at present. The Confederation of Agriculturalists also wishes to represent the last two groups, and declares that the parties concerned would favor such a change, for their

incorporation in the Confederation of Agriculture is an immense strain on each of them, since their individual contributions exceed by far the earnings for one day's work, amounting to about 36 lire, if to the compulsory are added the optional contributions, and the subscription to the agricultural newspaper, *Il Lavoro d'Italia Agricolo*, which after all is also compulsory.

It would also correspond more closely to the spirit of the law if the land owners who, sometimes working as agricultural laborers, pass most of their time in cultivating their own soil, were united with the Confederation of Agriculturalists. But to this the president of the Confederation of Agriculture objects that although the problem of production may be the same to the small as to the large land owner, to the former selling the product is quite a different problem, and no attention would be paid to their point of view in an organization dominated by the rich agriculturalists. This, however, is a difficulty which exists in the industrial field also, and its solution has been attempted by the creation of a permanent commission for the study of the problems of small-scale industry. The same policy might be followed by the Confederation of Agriculturalists.

The *mezzadro* should not be regarded as an agricultural employer. He is a participator who gives half of the capital employed in the undertaking, but in addition he offers his labor, and this is decisive from the point of view of organization, for he is not a land owner, but a worker, owning some capital.

Some persons believe that the differences in opinion will be eliminated or at least lose their importance when an agricultural corporation is formed, for it will be guided by a general viewpoint, while the representatives of the opposing confederations are always trying to demonstrate to their followers that they effectively defend the group interests.

Not only in the agricultural field do the problems of incorporation present themselves. The tendency to separate the intellectual from the manual workers, which has been carried out by the dissolution of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates, has already been mentioned. On the other hand, the Confederation of the Sea and Air Workers wishes to see the harbor workers, who are represented at present by the Confederation of Employees in Inland Transportation, included in their organization, because they believe that they are confronted with problems similar to those of the seamen.

Frequently these difficulties of incorporation are merely of technical importance, but at other times they are an expression of the still existent class spirit and class struggle. The very fact that the commercial employers have not included the representatives of the workers in the organization which they have recently created and which may well be termed a corporation, shows that the labor leaders are not altogether incorrect in claiming that the employers often interpret coöperation as domination on their part.

The same feeling finds expression also in the attitude of the employers towards the representatives of the workers, as was illustrated by the opposition of the industrialists to workers' representatives in the factories. When the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates was dissolved, and Rossoni lost his position as the leader of the working masses, this was interpreted by the workers as a swing of the Government to the Right, and discontent was the result. It is indeed true that the capitalists had desired the removal of Rossoni for a long time, and it was only because the Confederation had developed historically into a united organization of the workers, and perhaps because Rossoni had a certain following which it was not regarded as wise to irritate, that he was not removed earlier. It was said that the growing influence of Rossoni on the working population displeased Mussolini, and that he had

already tried in several ways to snatch the power from his hands, but in May, 1928, Rossoni was again elected by the unanimous acclamation of six thousand fascist worker representatives. Several times it was rumored that Rossoni had been removed, and when it finally occurred, the Government declared that it had decided upon the dissolution of the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates to give greater autonomy to the various federations as a first step toward the creation of a corporate state resting on class coöperation. As a matter of fact, whatever class consciousness and unity among the workers existed in Italy, was represented by the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates and by the person of Rossoni, and, in this sense, his removal means a concession to the capitalists. Indeed, he often was declared by them to be too radical, for the Confederation had frequently opposed the more conciliatory and more prudent attitude of the Ministry of Corporations.

Still it is probable that other reasons contributed to the decision, for Rossoni, while he was able to attract part of the laborers—since he dominated the entire visible labor movement—was branded by a section of the workers as insincere or corrupt, because he had, they maintained, abused his position to enrich himself. In either case Rossoni tended to become an element of weakness to the fascist party, and it was perhaps even thought that he had begun to hinder the complete institution of the syndicate system, for many workers opposed any movement guided by him. When Mussolini removed him, the act was cited by his opponents as illustrating what they claim to be one of his characteristics, that of disavowing his collaborators after he has used them to carry out his aims.

Nevertheless, even at present the Italian labor movement contains radical elements among the labor leaders and their followers, as was recently confirmed by the secretary gen-

eral of the fascist party in an introduction to a new edition of the charter of labor: "... the party can therefore not abandon the syndicates to themselves, until all the last traces of socialism which are still numerous in the working masses have disappeared."

When the employers mention this fact, they know that it is equivalent to saying that the class struggle still exists. Most of the fascist labor leaders have come from the socialist or the revolutionary syndicalist field. For whatever reason they may have gone over to fascism, they cannot and do not completely forget their training in the lines of the "red" parties, and under the banner of fascism the old ideas are again advocated. This is all the easier as fascism has not bound itself by any social doctrine; it has only shown tendencies which have often deviated in one direction or another, although the general trend has perhaps remained the same. This was and is the strength of fascism, for it permits the inclusion of persons of strongly opposing ideas in the ranks of the same party, but it presents also a problem, for a change in name does not correspond to a modification in convictions and attitude. Hence, even in the party only a minority is fascist, that is, imbued by specifically fascist conceptions. The great majority of the fascists have remained socialists, if they were socialists before; Catholics, if they were formerly of the popular party; and liberals, if this was their previous attachment. But although the name of fascist covers all, these tendencies are felt under the surface and each political group within the party criticises fascism in so far as it does not correspond to their former convictions, and strives to influence development in that direction.

Powerful and united against its adversaries, fascism suffers from an inner friction which it will be difficult to eliminate, unless fascism crystallizes its attitude—and that may

mean rebellion of a part of its followers. But even the fascists doubt whether their party can indefinitely continue to include followers of opposing opinions, when the split which separates the members becomes steadily more noticeable and may turn into a wide and profound abyss which cannot be bridged. Under the heavy strain the smooth exterior surface may give way, and, in that case, the opponents of the regime would find that the party which had been victorious over all their attempts to overthrow it, had decomposed, and therefore had lost its position. The desire for a definition of fascism is widely felt, as the feeling is quite general that the present phase of fascism is only transitory and that it will evolve towards another political form, though it is difficult to tell what this form will be.

In this inner conflict, in the midst of this rivalry, struggle and antipathy, there is one person accredited, or, at least, obeyed by all fascists; one person who holds all the others in check, who continually smoothes out the difficulties, uses the weight of his prestige in favor of one side or the other; one person who, untouched by the tumult below him, prevents it from developing into an open fight, and who, if necessary, decides the conflict at critical moments by his word; one person who keeps fascism united against all outside enemies. Only Mussolini, who, with rapidity and sure intuition, grasps the situation, who so strongly feels the sentiments which animate the others and so correctly evaluates them, who has the capacity of effectively and almost instantaneously formulating his impressions and his attitude, only Mussolini, who is able to adapt himself rapidly to any situation and who for so many is still convincing in his new point of view, only he is able to hold the fascist party together.

Elements of all classes of the population have confidence in him, and many so-called fascists should rather be classified as followers of Mussolini. The workers say that he, the

son of a blacksmith, cannot forget his humble origin, that he recalls even now, while the leader of the Italian people, the years of misery and hunger he experienced, and that, privately at least, he surely recognizes that among his former socialist comrades there were honest, sincere, disinterested persons, with courage to fight and suffer for their ideas. Although Mussolini might to-day oppose and criticise any socialist and may exalt all fascists, he, who has such a sound judgment, well knows the individual value of the men he meets, to whatever party they have belonged. While he repulses no one and is trying to utilize all elements, he strives to attach those who he believes are capable and whom he perhaps respects, to his party or at least to his Government.

Nevertheless he has, by his past attitude and even by his concessions, given reason to the capitalist class to look upon him as the defender of their interests, and he is careful to keep on good terms with the most powerful of the industrialists, even if they are not members of the fascist party. It is the ability of Mussolini always to reestablish a balanced situation, which gives persons who are well aware of the inner friction, confidence in the future of fascism, and not without reason are they disturbed when they think of the day when his talent for smoothing out differences will no longer assist them. The difficulty is not one of giving him a legal successor, it is the improbability of finding a person with his intuitive faculty and his genius for reconciling, at least temporarily, opposing ideas.

In the complex of fascism, not only does the class struggle still exist, perhaps at times latent, but ready to break out at any moment; not only are personal rivalries and hatreds, even between noted fascists, looming under the surface; but group stands sometimes against group, and, even in the same field, different aims are pursued or, at least, different methods are advocated. It has already been indicated that

the Confederation of Fascist Syndicates and the Ministry of Corporations do not always agree. While the labor leaders and their followers accuse the Undersecretary of Corporations, Bottai, of being too conservative, some elements in the party consider his attitude—from another point of view—as too liberal, too frank and too critical. This shows that there also exists a struggle between the syndicate movement and the fascist party. Some elements in the party are radically intolerant and of totalitarian¹ ideas, which cannot always be applied, as it is sometimes necessary to make concessions to the workers, in order to make them accept the fascist regime. The Catholics declare that it is due to this hidden conflict between the party and the labor movement that the syndicates abstain from political action, which is the condition that the Catholics have stated as one of the prerequisites under which they would permit their adherents to enter the fascist labor associations. Indeed, even non-fascist laborers affirm that, at least in some districts, within the syndicate no distinction is made between those enrolled in the party and the politically unorganized individuals.

Again, the party recognizes the danger that under the banner of fascism, in spite of all precautions, the labor movement may turn into a revolutionary movement, due to the many former socialists it includes. The very "tax in workers", originally a socialist measure and hence abolished in 1925, was again adopted in 1927 by the fascists. As a result of these tendencies within the party, the so-called "factory groups" were organized in Milan, which included those enrolled members of the syndicates who also belong to the fascist party. They were created under the pretext that the workers who were fascist, should give an example of greater dignity, diligence and discipline to the others, but

¹ The fascists call their methods and ideas "totalitarian", meaning thereby that no other point of view can even be considered.

in reality they represented control of the fascist party within the syndicates, and were therefore very unfavorably looked upon by the syndicate leaders, who further doubted whether they were not subject to capitalist influence, and organized to break up the more radical syndicate element in the northern Italian cities. The fascist labor leaders do not believe unreservedly in the sincere desire of the employers to collaborate with the workers.

Potent means of propaganda among the laboring masses, first among which ranks the *Dopolavoro*, are in the hands of the party, although the secretary general of the party, Augusto Turati, who is the special commissioner at the head of the *Dopolavoro*, as well as Bottai, recognizes that the organization should rather be attached to the Ministry of Corporations and will ultimately be surrendered to it, or at least become a state and not a party institution.

At times, the party principle penetrates into the very heart of industrial life, and although the orders coming from outside may be obeyed, they leave a feeling of discontent. The article of the charter of labor, and the law based upon it, which established that in employment the fascist workers are to be preferred to others, was originally conceived because many employers, according to the frequent statements of Rossoni, had obstinately given preference to non-fascist workers. This occurred especially when the workers belonged to the "black shirts" and hence could at any moment be mobilized, without thereby losing either their jobs or their pay.

The provision is at present not only criticized by all those who disapprove of the discriminatory attitude of fascism, but it is opposed even by the industrial employers, who wish to be free to engage or dismiss any laborer they please. Already, especially in small centers and small enterprises, this freedom is restricted, for a protest may be raised against

the dismissal of a fascist worker who is an old member of the party, and hence accredited, while the employer may be induced to dismiss a good worker because he has socialist leanings or simply because he has had a quarrel with a fascist laborer. Such interventions are said to be common; in larger enterprises it occurs that the industrialist is prevented from dismissing a large group of workers, because the prefect notifies him that such an action would dangerously increase the number of unemployed, and that he therefore disapproves of the measure, a policy which corresponds somewhat to the "tax in workers", found in agriculture.

But frequently the clause of the charter of labor which accords preference to the fascist workers is neglected in favor of the one which states that selection must be carried on among the laborers, and hence gives the employers the right to choose the workers they please. Only on the latter grounds can an industrial employer, in dismissing a group of workers because of a crisis in production, promise them that when they again engage laborers, those who had already worked with them would be given the preference.

The influence of the party on the syndicate movement has existed from the very beginning. The strength of the party before the March on Rome had in large part been due to the inclusion of many young elements which in their youthful enthusiasm had given energy to the party superior to its numerical strength. After the accession of fascism to power, these persons had to be compensated in some way, and the developing fascist syndicalism offered the opportunity to many of becoming secretaries in the syndicates. But as in that profession not only enthusiasm, but also experience are required, the results have not always been satisfactory. It has happened that a young person put at the head of a local or provincial labor movement has adopted heart and soul the cause of the workers and defended their interests

with intelligence, but it has also happened that the so-appointed labor representatives have not understood the problems that came up because they were utterly unprepared, being, perhaps, lawyers at the head of agricultural syndicates. Unable therefore to discuss problems intelligently with the workers or with their former spokesmen, they often have used their power and position simply to command silence, while, without any real interest in their tasks, they have neglected them and merely drawn their salaries. Naturally, that policy leads the workers to hate their representatives, and as the latter are usually aware of this feeling, they, of course, oppose the idea that the workers should select their own leaders, for they realize very well that they would thereby lose their positions. The situation varies from province to province. Such persons justify their attitude by invoking the fascist principle of hierarchy, which advocates that the labor representatives should be nominated, if possible in accordance with the wishes of the workers, but also against them, so as to avoid the abuse which agitators have made at times of free elections. While some fascists have been able to adapt themselves, others who sincerely strived to become good syndicate leaders have failed because they lacked the necessary experience, and because they, coming from a different social class, did not quite understand or rather sense, the ideas and needs of the working masses.

To remedy this situation, the workers demanded, and Rossoni put it on his program, that the syndicate leaders should be chosen from the ranks of the workers in the specific industry they represented, even though this might be difficult in the beginning, and never from among outsiders, who neither know the workers' attitude, nor the occupations in which they are engaged. Rocco, too, believes that the workers should be given a certain freedom in electing their representatives, although such elections should not become valid

before they are approved, and he does not think it a wise policy, nor, perhaps, permanently possible, to take all autonomy from the workers and to impose as their leaders persons who do not understand them and in whom they have no confidence. But recently Augusto Turati wrote in his introduction to the charter of labor:

... also when all officials of the syndicates are chosen from among the ranks of the party, we shall not have solved the question. . . . The problem consists therefore in permeating the syndicate organizations with fascist consciousness, and not in permeating the political organizations of the regime with syndicate consciousness. . . .

After the elimination of Rossoni, the syndicate representatives seem also to have adopted that idea, as a recent statement in their newspaper shows: "the syndicate officials must remain, as they are, black shirts, delegated by the party to direct the syndicates."¹

Bottai also is quite convinced that a labor leader can come from another social class, that he need not be born a person who devotes his life to the cause of the working class, and that he can be educated to become a syndicate official. When the socialists criticise the syndicate policy of fascism, saying that a fascist labor leader will not be a person who has been led by his convictions and his sentiments to put himself in the service of the socially weakest class, but simply a bureaucratic employee like many others, and that the career of a secretary of a syndicate will correspond absolutely to that in administration or in the legal field, Bottai is in agreement with them:

It is necessary for the new fascist youth to be convinced that what, in times of bitter and open political struggle, was for the

¹ *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, January 15, 1929.

honest an ideal vocation, and for the dishonest a lucrative business, now rises to the level and the dignity of a profession, which is connected with the very existence of the administration and the political organization of the state.¹ . . . [Again he said:]

To the young men who are preparing to increase the unutilized and useless reserves of professionals without professions, this new profession must be indicated. . . .²

In consequence a school has been created in Genoa for the preparation of syndicate officials, to which persons coming from all social strata will go, for " . . . one must not be ashamed to engage in the profession of the organizer of workers."³

However, not all young men are fitted by nature for this kind of work. They must have special qualities in addition to and as a basis for their preparation. Selection and instruction must supplement each other, to make an efficient director of a syndicate, even in employers' associations, for a good industrialist or specialist is not necessarily a capable syndicate representative. It is, of course, recognized that many of the syndicate secretaries in the fascist regime are not equal to their tasks, but the majority are said to be satisfactory and where so many are concerned, it is urged that selections could not be made without mistakes in so short a period of time.

If the preparatory schools for syndicate officials are developed, it is definitely settled that the labor leaders will not be elected by those they represent. This may have serious consequences. Already the syndicate secretaries lack authority among the workers; they can perhaps impose their will, but they cannot convince. The entire syndicate system

¹ Speech of Bottai in the Chamber of Deputies, June 1, 1927.

² Speech of Bottai in the Chamber of Deputies, March 15, 1928.

³ Speech of Bottai at the inauguration of the school for syndicate officials in Genoa, February 12, 1928.

which fascism has worked out is a superstructure having no connection with the laboring masses, and this situation will become accentuated, unless the workers are given a part in directing and modifying it. The present organization is not the result of a struggle on the part of the workers, it has been given to them without regard to their approval or their criticism. Therefore, even if it should be perfect in theory, it can only amount to a superstructure, which is built on the lack of interest of the masses, and applied only in its exterior forms. It is a skeleton, in itself worthy of study, but not alive, because the people refuse to fill it with movement; it is an organism lacking the animating blood. The workers are incorporated into syndicates, they pay their contributions because the law compels them, but they are not in the organization, and they resent what they regard as an excessive control from above as an offense to their dignity.

Nor do the fascists fail to face this situation. In 1927 Mussolini recognized: " . . . the urban proletariat is in great part still distant, and if it is no longer opposed, it is not sympathetic. . . ."¹

They well know that they cannot permanently keep up an organization which is passively opposed, or at least regarded indifferently by the workers, and hence the employers are said sometimes to consider with uneasiness the possibility that Mussolini, if he deems it necessary to enliven the syndicate organism, will favor the workers and adopt socialist policies. But it is also true that, if Mussolini should do so, he will not necessarily choose the syndicate organism as a means to arrive at his end. He is above all a politician, and not a syndicalist, and will avail himself of political measures.

What has happened to the labor movement in Italy is a proof of another fascist theory, which Rocco has advanced, namely that it is impossible or unwise to create a situation

¹ Mussolini, Speech of May 26, 1927.

by law, and that legislation should follow action; that when conditions have developed to a point when legislation becomes necessary it should be undertaken, and not before. Bottai has well pointed out:

. . . A wise regulation of relations between organized groups, fixed directly and spontaneously, that is, following a natural tendency, is worth more, and will always be worth more—and the state is the first and will always be the first to declare it—than a regulation fixed after the intervention of a corporate organ.¹

But never will the fascists arrive at spontaneous agreements, declarations or regulations, if the workers are not a real part of their syndicate system, and still less, if—as others declare—the workers are really opposed to the Government.

Their true attitude is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine and can only be deduced from general symptoms. Not even the fascists can at present tell with precision the attitude of the people to their Government. On November 3, 1928, thousands of agriculturalists united in Rome, and under a heavy rain acclaimed the head of the Government, who addressed them. But their applause, and still less their coming to the capital, cannot be regarded as symptoms of approval of the regime, for it is easy to find a very large number of agriculturalists, who in all their lives have never had, and probably would never have had, an opportunity to see Rome, who would enthusiastically make the journey if all of the expenses of the trip were paid, as was the case in this instance.

But although the fascist leaders are certainly not deluded by such demonstrations, still they can hardly gain more than a general impression of the situation, for few people will admit their true opinions to the responsible leaders. As those who have frankly stated their adverse attitude have

¹ Bottai, article in *Informazioni Corporative*, April 25, 1928.

put themselves into a rather delicate position, to say the least, many prefer to remain silent, or to express their point of view only to persons in whom they have absolute confidence. While disapproval is thus often masked by indifference, others—and not a few—who openly and loudly acclaim fascism, admit that they disapprove of the fascist regime, when they are among safe friends or in their homes.

Nor is this insincerity to be found exclusively among politically unimportant elements. Even persons in rather advanced syndicate positions, in discussing the policies of the Government with an outsider, diligently oppose whatever criticisms are advanced as long as a third person is in the room, only to say, as soon as they are under the outsider's eyes alone, that they agree perfectly with the objections, and that they themselves do not approve of the Government, but that they could not say so before, because it might have been heard.

Infinitely more worthy of respect are those who courageously defend their point of view, even should it be erroneous, than those who laugh at their companions for maintaining a sincere and unconditioned faith in fascism, and who ironically classify them as fanatics, while for themselves their adherence to fascism presents either a convenient way of holding a good position, or is an action to which economic necessity has compelled them. It is certain that fascism also has sincere adherents, persons who are enthusiastic about it, and would give their lives at any moment to defend the regime, and especially its leader Mussolini, but how large this percentage really is, it is very difficult to tell.

The law states that preference is to be given to fascist workers, and to those enrolled in the syndicate organizations, and, in view of the widespread unemployment, many have sacrificed their ideas, at least temporarily. Only those whose convictions are better founded and who have more char-

acter resist, and very frequently these will be the better educated, the skilled workers. Hence, if it is true that there is a shortage of skilled workers in Italy, it is, among other reasons, because many have emigrated to bordering countries, especially to France. It is true that the favorable rate of exchange, which existed some years ago, attracted many, but it must also be observed that, when this was changed to the contrary by the stabilization of the lire, many workers did not return, although they had left their families in Italy. Those who have a greater dignity resent the suppression of their personality, the curtailment of their right freely to express their opinions; they prefer to live abroad, and as a result of this determination, Italy loses many of her most efficient, skilled workers, which certainly is not to the advantage of Italian production.

Furthermore, those who secretly criticise the regime, but nevertheless are among its open supporters, cannot always be condemned out of hand as insincere. Among them are persons in rather high positions in the fascist hierarchy, who adhered to the movement in the very beginning, when the desire for a strong Government was general, and when the violent methods were explained as temporarily necessary. If, by this time, they no longer agree with the policies of the fascist party, it is almost impossible for them to resign, for this would have very serious consequences for them and their families. They are fatally bound to the party in whatever policy it may adopt.

Therefore, the fascists will find it difficult to know the real sentiments of the country, as the number of enrolled members in the syndicates or the party is no fair index. Among those who sincerely believe that they are in favor of fascism, are many who have been converted pragmatically. They see that the fascist regime is an undeniable reality, they observe that the fascist party continues in power, and hence

they accept it without further comments as the Government of their country. Especially when they live or have lived abroad do they become fascists, influenced by patriotic feelings, for they realize that a foreigner is frequently identified with his country, and propaganda against his home Government is frequently misunderstood as criticism of the country itself. But those who adhered to the movement for such reasons cannot be counted on by fascism in time of crisis, for it is probable that, should Italy tomorrow be directed by a communistic or any other strong and autocratic Government, these persons will, not immediately, but after some time and after some hesitation, be converted to that political opinion under the influence of propaganda. It is severe to classify this behavior as insincerity or hypocrisy. Probably, and unfortunately, the majority of the people in every country and at all times act in this manner. It proves a weakness of character that is partly due to a pragmatic attitude and partly the result of not very marked personal opinions, and of a great susceptibility to suggestion. This is not a special characteristic of the fascists, nor of the Italian people; it is an attitude which can be observed in all social strata, which belongs to mankind in general and which led Pilate to wash his hands. As would be the case with any other strong Government with exclusive and totalitarian tendencies, this widespread attitude strengthens the fascist regime, but it also has its dangers, for this sort of approval and support is deceptive and may easily delude the leaders.

However, there are certain facts which are of importance in the interpretation of the feelings of the people towards the Government. The fascists do not deny their existence, but they explain them as the last signs of an attitude which they have in great part overcome. Opponents declare them to be sporadic expressions of discontent or the result of misery which may quickly lead to revolt. The occurrence of strikes

in spite of the high penalties has already been mentioned, as well as the stoppage of machines, as occurred notably in an enterprise in Milan, when the workers objected to a reduction in the compensation for piece work. To these may be added general agitations, especially in the districts of Venice and Trieste, demonstrations of the unemployed, in which fascist workers also participated, the destruction of employment offices, and unexpected outbursts against the regime and the low wages.

As far as possible these occurrences are limited and suppressed: 5,000 workers of the Fiat automobile factory had prepared a petition, addressed to Mussolini, in which they complained of the low wages, but the document never arrived at its destination, for as soon as the syndicate officials heard of what was going on, they intervened and rendered any further action impossible. Moreover, the general workers' assemblies, which the newspapers had announced were to take place, have not been held, because, it is said, after experience with the first of them the fascists feared that the workers would use the opportunity to criticise the policies of the Government.

As all the lawful means of explaining their point of view have been taken from the people, their discontent sometimes finds illegal expression. The recent fires in official buildings are perhaps due to accidents, but it has been thought that they might be attributed to conspiracies. The distress which is declared to be very serious in the country districts has led some desperate individuals to hold up travellers on the roads and to demand their money under compulsion, occurrences which had disappeared in Italy long ago.

The cities have been cleared of beggars, but while it is to the credit of fascism to have rid Italy of this not very flattering characteristic, it must not be interpreted as a sign of prosperity. Some opponents of the Government declare

that the fascists, by their policy of ruralization, are trying to clear the cities of their most desperate elements, because in the country the distress is not so evident, and is not noticed by the foreign traveler. But if it is unjust, and perhaps unfair, to attribute the entire movement aiming at ruralization to this motive, it is nevertheless a convenient coincidence that what the Government regards as necessary in the general interest of the country, requires a policy which not only may decrease the actual distress, but also render the existing misery less visible.

If it is difficult for the Government to gain a fair impression of the general attitude in the country, and if it is very hard for an outsider to evaluate the various events correctly, it is quite impossible for an Italian who does not travel or who is not in continual contact with persons in other parts of Italy, to discover the general public opinion; he may be well informed on the situation in his province, but he does not know what is going on and what people think in other places. Therefore no general movement is possible, or, at least, to start such a movement would be extremely difficult. Many, therefore, long ago resigned themselves to political inactivity. They do not oppose the Government, they quietly and passively await the outcome of the fascist policies. But even the fascists know that the people are tired and sceptical when they are told that the economic situation will change in the near future.

Unemployment is high: the official figures¹ give 363,557 unemployed for December, 1928, 461,889 for January, 1929, and 489,347 for February, 1929, the greatest percentage of unemployed being found in agriculture, which is all the more serious, since these months are usually a period of intense agricultural activity. Figures then drop to only 228,000 unemployed in June, but it must be remembered in this con-

¹ Figures of the Central Institute of Statistics.

nection that only the unemployed who receive subsidies are recorded in these figures and that subsidies are only granted for three months in succession. Thus, even if all those who were unemployed in February had found no work since, the figures for June would fail to picture that fact. Furthermore, subsidies are given to a worker only after he has been unemployed for two months, so that the large number of casual unemployed are not included in the figures. Also, of those who are employed many work only four or five days a week. These data do not, therefore, represent the labor situation correctly. Although it is recognized that there was some improvement in Italian economic conditions in the spring of 1929, a continuous problem is presented by the fact that every year young workers declare themselves willing to accept lower wages than those with families, as a result of which the young persons replace the older ones on a less satisfactory level.

If the economic situation in Italy does not greatly improve, out of the passive attitude of the workers there may after all develop a strong opposition. Again, the consent or approval of the capitalists depends chiefly on the success or failure of the Government to solve the economic problem. Already, as a result of the difficult position in which they have been placed by the revaluation of the lire, that class has begun to be irritated, and although still quiet and disciplined, it is in bad humor.

If, on the one hand, the satisfactory application of the fascist syndicate program is only possible under more advantageous economic conditions, on the other, it depends on the political policy of fascism. The fascists reproach the socialists, saying that they have ruined their labor movement by their political action, and they affirm the necessity of substituting economic groups for political parties but they also

maintain that "... once more it has been proved that only a political gesture is capable of creation."¹

Rossoni, the labor leader declared: "Political fascism is without doubt the power dominating the national life; parties and currents, which, useless as they are, could in any way polemize against fascism, are no longer tolerated."² And again: "... Fascist syndicalism is only an instrument of the party, of the regime, and of the revolution. . ."³

There is a contradiction in the two fascist opinions, and many of those who believe that the fascists are right in advocating at least a separation of political propaganda from social action, disapprove of its tendency to allow politics to interfere with syndicate life, for domination by politics of national life is in itself the negation of the syndicate or corporate state.

This supremacy of politics seems especially serious because political action means rather the action of the party than of the state, for it is incorrect to maintain that the fascist party has succeeded in fusing itself with the state in the eyes of the population, persisting as a separate organization only for reasons of propaganda. Moreover, the terms "fascist" and "Italian" have by no means become synonymous, as was hoped. Hence the fascist doctrine, which proclaims that the state is superior to the individual citizens, does not quite apply. Indeed, such a state, in order to recognize and defend the general interests, should be made up of all political, social and economic elements of the country, and these should be duly represented in the Government, since a party Govern-

¹ Carlo Costamagna, *Lo Stato Corporativo, quale Stato di Diritto*, p. 14. Edition of the *Diritto di Lavoro*, Rome, 1928.

² Edmondo Rossoni, "Il Sindacalismo nella Rivoluzione Fascista," p. 367 of the volume *La Civiltà Fascista*, Typographical Union, Turin.

³ *Ibid.*

ment is apt to fail in this difficult and supreme task, and only to take care of the interests of a special group. "The national state must not be the expression of particular forces and interests, for then it ceases to be the national expression in order to become the 'business committee' of one side."¹ Especially in the case of fascism is this a serious criticism, because, as even fascists recognize, their party does not always include the best elements of the people, for the most noted among the intellectuals are opposed to it, and not the worst workers are still outside the syndicates. Hence, whenever the Government makes concessions to the less reputable and less respectable members of the party, it may be easily acting in a manner which it must itself recognize not to be in the general national interest, but opposed to it. The Government is conscious of this difficulty and early in 1929 there seemed to be indications that it was willing, perhaps under the pressure of the general disapproval of its party policy, to change somewhat its attitude and to purify its ranks. Other elements were struggling to gain the lead of the party. Already it had been proposed to dispossess all those who have made fortunes for which they cannot honestly account since fascism came into power. The new tendency was also shown in the appointment of prefects, when accredited conservative persons were chosen rather than the black shirts of earlier days. Later events, however, have indicated that the more conservative currents have again been weakened.

Many people, indeed, believe, and the fascists who recognize the dangers and are willing to confront them have faith, that fascism will be able to overcome its difficulties, and they declare that every movement has moments of crisis, which do not necessarily lead to ruin. The leaders of fascism realize

¹ Edmondo Rossoni, Speech at the national congress of the syndicates of journalists, Rome, March 10, 1928.

that the solution of the economic problem would prepare the way for the success of the syndicate experiment, but they also know that its solution is hampered by political policies, and that, if they want the syndicate system to be more than a superstructure, to be really the basis of the Italian state, in which the syndicates shall be the cells making up the national organism, they must accord a greater freedom to the people in their syndicate life. The average worker opposes fascism not so much on theoretical grounds, as because it has not improved his economic position, has restricted his freedom of speech and assembly, and has suppressed his right to elect representatives. He is aware that he may discuss particular measures adopted or proposed, but that he is never allowed to criticise the Government.

A tendency certainly exists to grant a minimum of freedom, but it is not certain that such a policy is possible any longer. It is maintained even in Italy that the people are discontented and opposed to the fascist Government, and that they would use any opportunity of expressing their attitude freely in a protest against the party in power. Thus, fascism, perfectly conscious of the situation, but unable to deviate from the course upon which it has embarked, is compelled, much against the will of some of its leaders, to adopt an ever more intolerant and rigid policy. Consequently their totalitarianism, which their opponents call tyranny, becoming ever more intolerant, may lead to the ruin of fascism.

The only person who could perhaps change the direction fascism has taken, due to his personal influence, is its leader, Mussolini. However, recently it seems as though even he is beginning to lose public confidence. While formerly the blame for any objectionable measure has been put on those persons who publicly assumed responsibility for them, people now question whether these acts have not been decided upon by Mussolini himself. It is rumored that he often

directs a certain move outside the field of his competence against the advice of his expert collaborators, and still expects them to introduce the measure under their name. Should this suspicion of the direct responsibility of Mussolini for almost all official acts become general, it may lead to serious difficulties. If it is true that the only person who keeps the fascist party together and the only one in whom the people have confidence, is Mussolini, then the fact that he too is losing prestige, may mark the beginning of the end. Still, although the situation cannot be said to be especially favorable at present, it is not desperate for the fascists. The Fascist Government has been weak also in times past and, nevertheless, has succeeded in dominating the situation, and in regaining a firm position.

CHAPTER X

EXTRA-LEGAL LABOR ASSOCIATIONS

THE law of April 3, 1926, prohibits the conferring of legal personality on associations of the state, provincial and municipal employees and on employees of public utility enterprises. The provision applies also to the railroads, postal, telegraph and telephone enterprises, to the principal banks and to semi-official institutions. As they cannot be legally recognized they cannot enter into collective contracts or apply for jurisdiction to the labor courts, the state having an interest in all cases.

However, the organization of employees attached to national utility enterprises may be authorized after they have presented their statutes, by a decree of the head of the Government, and that of employees of similar interprovincial institutions by the Minister of the Interior, while the prefect has power to authorize the local associations of such employees. All associations of persons employed by the state must be authorized by a decree of the head of the Government, and only one organization is authorized for a given occupation. But the head of the Government may at any time revoke authorization of the above enumerated associations for reasons of discipline and good order, or may order their dissolution. Disregard or violation of the orders issued in this connection, is considered a serious infraction of discipline and is punishable by removal from office.

All organizations of the army officers or soldiers and of the navy, aeronautics or other armed corps of the state, the provinces and the municipalities, and organizations of legal

and administrative magistrates or of employees of the ministries are prohibited, as the interests of these persons are more directly cared for by the state, for which they are administrators. Dismissal or demotion are among the punishments for violation of this provision.

While associations of professors of secondary or higher institutions are prohibited, an organization has been authorized by the Government for the teachers in primary schools. Extra-legal labor organizations exist also for the employees of the railroads and the postal, telegraph and telephone enterprises, for tax collectors, tariff agents and other state and public utility employees.

When the Rocco Law and the charter of labor declare that syndicate organization is free, and that the non-recognized labor organizations can exist as extra-legal associations, although legal recognition, carrying with it the right of representing the workers of a given group and of imposing contributions on them, is reserved to the fascist organizations, they suggest the idea that the syndicates of other political parties, notably those of the Catholics and socialists, still exist.

However, the Catholics dissolved their syndicates after the passing of the law on the regulation of labor relations, not only because they recognized that when representation of the workers and the right to conclude collective contracts have been taken from a syndicate it has lost its very reason for existence, but also because of Article Seven of the standards for the application of the Rocco Law, which declares that no person, belonging to an extra-legal syndicate may become a member of a legally recognized syndicate. Since special advantages are accorded to those enrolled in the fascist syndicates, such as preference in employment, membership in an extra-legal labor organization, which carries with it non-membership in the representative syndicate, would constitute an economic disadvantage to a worker.

In spite of the difficult situation, the socialist organizations have resisted. They were subject to the law of January 24, 1924,¹ which provides that "associations and corporations of whatever kind, [which draw] all or part of their contributions from the workers, [are put under] the supervision of the political authority of the province." When the prefect believes, on the basis of an investigation into the accounts of a given syndicate which the law allows him to undertake, that "there are well founded reasons for suspicion" that the funds have been used for other purposes than the benefit of the workers, he is given power to dissolve the association. This provision rendered any propaganda for non-fascist labor organizations almost impossible, all the more so, because Article Three of the provincial and municipal law gives the prefects the right to dissolve any association in the interest of public order, and it is evident that this provision may easily be abused. In the turbulent times at the beginning of the fascist Government, when the party advocated the use of violent measures to extend its power, this certainly occurred.

In November, 1925,² before the law on the regulation of labor relations had received legal sanction, new measures were adopted to control the socialist organizations. All associations were "obliged to communicate to the authority in charge of public safety their constitutions, statutes and national regulations, a list of their officers and members and any other information on their organizations and activities", and, "whenever false or incomplete information was given", the responsible persons were subject "to imprisonment for not less than one year and to a fine of from 5,000 to 30,000 lire, besides expulsion from public offices for five years."

While several countries have required the registration of

¹ Law of January 24, 1924, n. 61.

² Law of November 26, 1925.

trade unions and the deposit of their constitutions and regulations and of a list of their members and officers, this provision acquires a special significance in Italy, for at the time when the law was passed, the fascist Government was in its "period of destruction," as Mussolini termed it, and therefore any worker, who adhered to a socialist labor organization, exposed himself to physical violence. Therefore it required much courage and determination to remain a member of a socialist syndicate after the Government had required the deposition of the list of members, and many workers withdrew from their former associations.

But even when conforming to the regulations, it was difficult for the non-fascist labor organizations to exist, for among the "extraordinary laws" of the fall of 1926, issued after the attempt on the life of Mussolini at Bologna on October 30, 1926, were the police measures of November 5, which provided for the suppression for an indefinite period of time of any publication, and for the dissolution of all parties, associations and organizations, which engage in activities against the regime. By this measure the socialist syndicates could be easily eliminated, for by their very nature they are opposed to the fascist regime, nor could they be re-established, in view of Article Four of the provisions for the defense of the state,¹ which also formed part of the "extraordinary laws". This article states:

Whoever reorganizes, even under different forms and names, associations and organizations or parties dissolved upon an order of the public authority, is punishable by imprisonment of from three to ten years, besides the permanent exclusion from public office. Whoever is a member of such associations, organizations or parties, is punishable for the sole fact of participation by imprisonment for from two to five years and by perpetual exclusion from public offices. Whoever, in any way,

¹ Provisions for the defense of the state, issued on December 5, 1926, and later approved as a law.

makes propaganda for the doctrines, the programs and the methods of action of such associations, organizations or parties, is subject to the same fine.

This article is especially important in view of the dissolution and violent destruction of most of the local socialist labor organizations. Already the number of members had been greatly reduced, because even prior to the promulgation of the charter of labor, preference was given to the fascist workers. To the protest of the socialist Confederation of Labor against this discrimination, the *Popolo d'Italia*, the official paper of the fascist party, and the *Lavoro d'Italia*, the organ of the fascist syndicates, answered that the employment of the non-members of the fascist syndicates depended on the generosity of the syndicate secretaries. When, on July 30, 1926, the Confederation of Labor protested against an order of the local fascist organization at Molinella, stipulating the acceptance of fascist workers only, and received no answer, the laborers of Molinella, who have continually offered strong opposition to fascism, declared in an open letter:

The workers of Molinella are certainly not enthusiastic over the syndicate law. However, the law exists, and they ask that it be respected. The law does not oblige anybody to adhere to specific organizations. In Molinella there exists a strong group of people who do not know meanness and who do not want to torment their own consciences. And as fascism daily glorifies itself as heroic—there is no heroism where there is no chivalry—if it would really be so, it should feel that its adversaries, who fight and make sacrifices for their ideas are very much more worthy of respect than those insincere, lying and mean persons, who, although they are not fascists, pretend to be so, for love of a quiet life and for purpose of gain.¹

¹ Quoted from the *Report of the General Confederation of Labor of Italy* on the subject "Syndicate Freedom" at the Tenth International Conference of Labor, Geneva, June, 1927.

A reply to this letter was found in the article "Mistake and Extortion" of the *Corriere Padano*, which is the organ of Italo Balbo, who at that time was undersecretary of state at the Labor Ministry. Discussing the situation in Molinella, and calling it a political one, the article declared that impartiality was impossible, for the political struggle was decided by force: "The appeals to law and equity represent an unconscious moral extortion, and are ridiculous and absurd on the part of the enemy, before he has capitulated and proceeded to the regular surrender of arms."¹

It was quite impossible for the Confederation of Labor to continue its existence when deprived of most of its local offices, with its coöperatives and mutuals dissolved, and its followers boycotted. Whenever its organizations lost the majority of their members and the latter enrolled in the legally recognized syndicates, the property of the organization of the minority was turned over to the legal representatives of the workers for that industry, following Article 21 of the directions for the application of the law of April 3, 1926. In order to prevent an association from disposing of its property immediately before recognition, the prefect is empowered to provide for the transfer of such property to a special commissioner, and then the property is turned over to the syndicates immediately after recognition, or, in case such recognition is not granted within six months, is returned to the original holder. All this practically amounted to the suppression of syndicate freedom in Italy as even the fascists admit: "When the socialists accuse us of having suppressed syndicate freedom, we can only register this truth."²

Nevertheless, the Confederation of Labor tried to resist as long as possible. However, following the attempt on the life of Mussolini at Bologna, not only were the "extraordi-

¹ "Syndicate Freedom," *op. cit.*

² *Il Lavoro d'Italia*, May 3, 1929.

nary laws" issued, but direct measures were adopted against the anti-fascist organizations. In the first days of November, the offices of the Confederation of Labor in Rome and Milan were destroyed and sacked. After its return to its office in Milan, which was proposed to it by the police on November 9, 1926, the Confederation sent a protest to the authorities, describing the damage that had been done and stating among other things that:

In two offices no damage has been done to the furniture, but the closets have been completely emptied of what they contained (books, bound publications, material for study, collections of laws) which represented the result of some twenty years of diligent collecting. As slips of paper, with writing in pencil: "Not to be disarranged because of interest to the fascist corporations," have been found inserted in the keys of a closet, we are forced to assume that whatever was not destroyed, was carried away.¹

No reply was made to these charges, and it is understandable why the Confederation in January, 1927, decided that it was no longer possible to continue its syndicalist activity in Italy. Six of the fourteen members of the directing board, coming together in Milan, declared the dissolution of the Confederation and the creation of a labor research association which would abstain from any propaganda. The "National Association for the Study of the Problems of Labor", under the leadership of Rinaldo Rigola, was established with the consent of Mussolini, but this organization has no influence on the laboring masses, and in general has not had the success hoped for, because its publications are read only by special students of the labor problem. Furthermore its influence was weakened by the publication by the Government of a declaration of its directors, stating that they approved of

¹ Quoted from the *Report of the Italian Confederation of Labor* on the subject: "Syndicate Freedom" at the Tenth International Conference of Labor, Geneva, June, 1927.

certain principles of fascist syndicalism, such as social insurance, control by the state, the ideas of a single syndicate and of legal recognition, and promising that they would not engage in any activity against the regime in the future. At the time, this announcement gave the workers the impression that the leaders concerned had surrendered to fascism. This was probably not their intention; they simply wished to keep up some activity, and, as the existence of the General Confederation of Labor was rendered practically impossible, although it was not officially dissolved, they resorted to the creation of an organization for the study of labor problems, hoping by the publication of a periodical to keep in contact with the people.

The executive committee of the Confederation of Labor immediately protested against the action of the group in Milan, and announced that the Confederation had been transferred abroad, with the approval of the competent international organization in Amsterdam. From Paris it tries to keep in touch with the Italian workers. It cannot at present exercise any direct influence on the Italian laboring class, but it is in contact with trustworthy persons in various parts of the country, probably unknown to each other, who keep it informed of special occurrences and of the general state of public sentiment. The number of these persons is very small, for they are selected with the knowledge that they risk their lives. They, in turn, have connections in the country, so that at a given moment they can serve as organizers of the masses or spread news of an order.

Secret labor organizations have also been formed by the communists. On February 20, 1927, the communists, at their congress in Milan, declared on the basis of the decision of the Rigola group, that the Confederation of Labor had been dissolved, but that the communists would create a committee which would replace the Confederation and which

would take over guardianship of the non-fascist workers. Against this decision the Italian Confederation in Paris protested, and on February 26, 1927, the International Syndicate Federation reconfirmed the transfer of the Italian Confederation abroad.

When, however, in the autumn of 1927, the International Syndicate Federation held its congress in Paris, to which the communist committee sent delegates, an attempt at reconciliation was made, to avoid any discord among that part of the Italian working masses which was opposed to fascism. The agreement was never signed, because the communists were unwilling to unite with a less radical organization, but it may be interesting to quote a part of the draft, since it states the aims of the anti-fascist labor organizations, which were to maintain:

. . . Connections with Italian workers by means of appropriate committees and trustworthy persons for the purpose of

(a) Following Italian political events and working on the discontent of the masses, provoked by the bad economic conditions, the lack of freedom and the fascist reaction;

(b) Inciting the masses to agitations and to the manifestation of their discontent in all possible ways, every time an occasion presents itself;

(c) Preserving and creating in the greatest possible number of localities nuclei, capable of collecting the masses around themselves as soon as it is possible to proceed to the reconstruction of the organization on a broader basis;

Systematic unfavorable criticism of the fascist syndicate activity and legislation, to be undertaken by the press and by bulletins to be sent to the syndicate organizations of the whole world. . . .

The communists continued their activities independently, and the fascists found it difficult to discover their secret organizations. Even at the present time the special tribunal

continues to sentence persons for communist agitation, but this is no fair index, as the fascists have adopted the term "communist agitations" for almost all activities directed against the regime. The so-called communists are hence not always members of that party, but profess other political opinions, as in a recent case when fourteen republicans were accused of communist activity. Hardly anybody, except the central organization in Moscow, and, perhaps, the Italian Government, know whether the fascists have been able to exterminate the communist movement in their country.

While the socialist party has been eliminated and while the leaders of the communists have either escaped to Russia or are in prison, the popular party, the political representatives of the Catholics, have kept their ranks intact in the *Azione Cattolica Italiana*, except for a small number of persons who have preferred exile. The "Catholic Action" has two main activities, one is socio-economic, the other relates to welfare work. The office of social welfare of the "Italian Catholic Action" under the leadership of Rev. Father Giovanni Balduzzi, has taken the place of the Catholic syndicate movement. They cannot, of course, represent the workers, but they try to assist them morally and materially whenever possible.

The "Catholic Action" denounces, to the competent ministries, cases of infractions of the syndicate laws, and on their initiative secret inspectors have several times been sent to various places to investigate working conditions, and the employers, when they have violated the law, have been punished. This activity of the "Catholic Action" has been all the more useful since the time when various penalties and regulations for the enforcement of collective contracts were established. The "Catholic Action" also assists the rice workers, who in large masses migrate every year to the Valley of the Po, by preparing them before their departure

and surveying the working and housing conditions in the rice districts.

This shows that the Government allows a certain freedom of action to the Catholics. It even permits criticism, which the leaders may advance in discussion with the fascist ministers. Thus Rocco, when drafting the law of April 3, 1926, asked Rev. Father Balduzzi for the opinion of the Catholics. When the charter of labor was discussed, and it was declared the workers had a right to a weekly holiday, the Catholics demanded that it should be explicitly stated that this day must coincide with Sunday. It is due to their intervention that Article 15 of the charter provides:

The worker has a right to a weekly rest, coinciding with Sunday. Collective contracts will apply this principle, taking into account the existing legal standards, the technical exigencies of the enterprises, and, within the limits of such exigencies, they will further provide that the civil and religious festivities be respected according to the local traditions. . . .

The Catholics insist that their social activities should not be interpreted as collaboration with fascism, because they have different syndicate convictions and because they see a fundamental contradiction between the Catholic religion, which preaches the supreme value of the individual soul, even in the most humble person, and fascism, which declares that the state is entitled to coerce individuals for its own superior ends. But as they regard it as their duty to assist the workers whenever they can, they use the only means that have remained to them, and the Government tolerates or even favors the "Catholic Action" in its public welfare undertakings, as long as they abstain from political propaganda.

While the socialists are deprived of all means of reaching the masses directly, the Catholics continue their activities in the field of moral and physical aid, whereby they certainly

remain in contact with the laboring masses, and they have an opportunity to influence them if they so desire. This is clearly realized by the syndicalist leaders, who from revolutionary times have had a hatred for the Church, and sometimes for religion. The activities of the "Catholic Action" in the labor field, which are favorably looked upon by some persons in the Government, such as Giuseppe Bottai, are violently opposed by the more radical of the syndicate representatives.

Following the Rocco Law, the Catholics presented a memorandum to Mussolini, containing their conditions for the entrance of their followers into the fascist syndicates, comprising the abstinence of the syndicates from political action, effective assistance to workers and the right of the "Catholic Action" to exist. A long and violent fight was carried on in the Government, during which some favored the acceptance of the request, while others believed that Mussolini should at least not reply personally, because this would give too great an importance to the Catholics. It has already been mentioned that Mussolini, after more than half a year, decided to guarantee the three points demanded by the Catholics. The acceptance by the head of the Government in itself, therefore, allowed to the Catholics in the country a certain freedom of action. Immediately following the Pact of the Lateran between the Holy See and the Italian Government, it seemed as though the politically active Catholic elements would support fascism, but the subsequent friction between the Vatican and the State indicates that the Catholics will continue to act independently and to pursue whatever labor policy they are permitted by means of the "Catholic Action".

CHAPTER XI

REPRESENTATION IN THE FASCIST SYNDICATE STATE

THE fascists do not deny that they have destroyed, sometimes by violent means, the organizations and political parties which opposed their totalitarian Government. But they claim that the corporate state, with which they have replaced the liberal-democratic state, is a more vital organism, more suitable to modern needs, and in more intimate touch with the people. They point out that the fascist state does not leave individuals dependent on their own resources, as did the liberal state, does not abandon them to the unfair play of economic forces; it does not adhere to the doctrine of *laissez-faire*, which amounts after all to the "might makes right" doctrine. On the contrary, it assists the citizens, it tutors them, and assures justice between social groups. In this state, which is energetically managed and which is the supreme guide and judge for the people, there is no place for a political democratic parliament which, by its inner dissent, frequently provokes crises, prevents strong and united action by the Government, and, by its long debates, renders the adoption of legal measures very slow. The conception of the corporate state calls for occupational representation in an economic chamber to complete its inner harmony. But "the problem of representation which—for it is useless to conceal it—constitutes the crucial point of the corporate system, has not yet been completely solved by fascism".¹

The Commission of Eighteen had been entrusted with the

¹ Carlo Costamagna, *Lo Stato Corporativo, quale Stato di Diritto*, p. 41.

study of the problem and of the practical possibilities in Italy of replacing the political parliament by a chamber of producers, in which the delegates were not selected on the basis of numerical representation, but as representatives of particular branches of production. During the elaborate discussions by the commission, it was pointed out that the permanent abolition of either of the houses would be dangerous, because a check on the activities of the other house would be eliminated. It was maintained by some members that a single chamber, if economic in character, would at least for the first few years, be incompetent to deal with questions of a wider scope, and would allow only for representation of the economic interests of the citizens, which is contrary to the very spirit of a supreme legislative assembly. The opinion was held by others that a body, partly economic and partly political would fall short of either purpose and would probably vote according to political considerations. Furthermore, the resulting reduction in the total number of deputies, invariably leading to an insufficient contact with the electorate, was inadvisable. Instead an increase in the total number of delegates would prove necessary, and, in consequence, would render the constitutional body still more unwieldy. Besides, under such circumstances economic representation would be at a disadvantage against the combined political delegates of the same house and the representatives of the other chamber.

To provide for the representation of economic interests in the Senate would result in a curtailment of the prerogatives of the King, who, at present, appoints its members, while the complete transformation of Parliament into an economic body would leave the country without any political and general representation, since the Crown members, chosen because of their outstanding accomplishments in various fields, are, in a sense, specialists also.

The creation of a third chamber in addition to the political parliament and the Senate was deemed too complicated. The commission finally recommended that economic activity should be divided into three fundamental groups, the first including the liberal professions, art and the civil service, the second agriculture, and the third industry, commerce and private employment. "To these three kinds of activity, three chambers [are to] correspond in every province, composed of the representatives of those enrolled in the respective categories. The three chambers united [are to] constitute the provincial corporate organ . . . which [will have] functions of administration and social jurisdiction and also those of legal representation."¹ Thereby all elements of the population irrespective of their political faiths, would be given representation, for the associations on which is to devolve the right of electing the representatives would have no political character. The provincial corporate organs would, through their executive bodies, elect the National Council of Corporations.

According to the opinion of the majority of the commission, this national corporate council should replace Parliament. Professor Corrado Gini protested against the complete elimination of political representation and proposed the maintenance of a political parliament and the substitution of an economic body for the Senate, and his idea was at first endorsed by the Fascist Grand Council. But on November 11, 1927, the Grand Council drafted a different proposal, which became the basis of the law of May 17, 1928, and which is in effect at the present time.

According to this law, the Senate remains unaltered, apart from internal regulations, while 800 delegates to Parliament are designated by the syndicates, "and 200 candidates are

¹ *Relazioni e Proposte della Commissione Presidenziale per lo Studio delle Riforme Costituzionali*, p. 117.

proposed by the legally constituted bodies and by associations, the scope of which is cultural, educational, charitable or propagandist, and which exist owing to the fact that they are of national importance".¹ A committee of five senators and five deputies designates the organizations which fulfill the foregoing conditions. The candidates must not be merely professional men, only fitted to speak for their particular group, but persons, "capable of furthering the historical aims of the nation."²

A list, comprising 1,000 persons is submitted to the Fascist Grand Council, which will choose 400 among them or even a smaller number if it regards the guarantees of political and national faith, given by the persons proposed as insufficient, or considers them technically incompetent. It may also reject the entire list. The Grand Council, if it in part or completely rejects the delegates designated by the competent associations, chooses the number of deputies necessary to complete the 400.

It has been pointed out by the Government that in any case it must provide for the representation of some economic groups, such as the intellectuals and artists, syndicate organization of which is still in the experimental stage and will perhaps never acquire full efficiency, as they will find themselves at an undue disadvantage as against the other classes unless their representation is in some way guaranteed.

The list of deputies thus modified by the Fascist Grand Council is submitted to the plebiscite of the electorate, which comprises all those paying syndicate contributions according to the law of April 3, 1926, or at least 100 lire in taxes, and those receiving pensions from the state or from some public body, and, finally, the priesthood. Every elector must have reached the age of twenty-five, or of eighteen, if he is married

¹ Electoral law of May 17, 1928, no. 1019, art. 4.

² Ministerial report to the Chamber of Deputies, presenting the law.

and has children. Women do not enjoy the right of suffrage. The electors will answer "yes" or "no" to the question on the voting paper: "Do you approve of the list of deputies designated by the Fascist Grand Council?"

Should the country refuse to endorse the Government's list of deputies, lists of deputies will be drawn up by all associations, containing 5,000 members who are allowed to vote, and from among these lists the people may choose. One list of candidates may not contain more than three-fourths of the number of deputies to be elected. All candidates of the list which obtained the greatest number of votes, will be declared elected, and the places reserved for the minority will be divided among the votes cast for all other lists.

The fascists themselves have declared, and Mussolini has affirmed that a parliament formed according to this electoral law is not an economic one, as the Commission of Eighteen had proposed, but essentially a political organization, for the Grand Council has a decisive influence in its determination. Still, this is no political representation in the democratic sense of the term, for only fascist candidates will be admitted.

This electoral law was attacked on the ground that any occupational representation must be based on already existing organizations, and not on ones newly created for that purpose as have been the fascist syndicates. While Parliament passed the draft of the electoral law without comment, it met with strong opposition from the liberal elements in the Senate. Senator Ciccotti declared in his speech:

The strength of a political assembly depends upon its having an opportunity to constitute a center of active resistance. If this opportunity is to exist, the Chamber must be independent.¹

Senator Ruffini took this stand against the law:

¹ Speech of Senator Ciccotti, *Atti Parlamentari, Senato del Regno Legislatura XXVII—1a Sessione 1924-28*.

It means going backward to take from the Italian people the right freely to choose their own representatives. For the right of choice of the deputies as guaranteed to the Italian people by Article 39 of the Statute, is a true right. And a simple proposal, or even the ratification by a totalitarian and plebiscitarian vote on a single list presented by the leaders of a single political party permitted by the Government, simply cannot be regarded as equivalent to a choice.¹

Senator Albertini defended the same point of view:

. . . The existence of an elective chamber does not suffice to take the absolute character from a regime, when the country is not allowed openly to fight, . . . a regime which defends the captured position by such means as are used by fascism. . . . The calling of elections has only a relative value when the executive power paralyses the legislative power and where a situation is created in which but a single opinion is tolerated and regarded as worthy of respect, that of the Government, that is, of the head of Government. . . . The opposition is not allowed to have newspapers, nor to hold assemblies, nor to found associations, nor to fight . . . nor, in conclusion, to exist. . . . [And therefore, if] the project under examination is intended to perpetuate fascism and its Government in power, taking from the Crown and the country the possibility of substituting others for them, would it not be more logical to abolish the chamber? It has been thought preferable to encourage the opinion that fascism has not restored the old absolutist regime, but a truly "syndicate representation", would presuppose deputies freely elected by all those belonging to the syndicates, not names proposed by the leaders and only upon the choice of the Grand Council. . . .²

A resolution against the endorsement of the law was pre-

¹ Speech of Senator Ruffini, *Atti Parlamentari, Senato del Regno Legislatura XXVII—la Sessione 1924-28*.

² Speech of Senator Albertini, *Atti Parlamentari, Senato del Regno Legislatura XXVII—la Sessione 1924-28*.

sent by Senator Ruffini and signed by forty-two members of the Senate. It read in part: "The Senate, holding that the law proposed deprives the Italian people of the most essential of its rights, which is guaranteed to it by the fundamental Statute of the Kingdom, and that it is their right freely to choose their own representatives. . . ."

To these declarations Mussolini answered that the fascists and the liberals spoke different tongues, so that discussion between them would lead to no result. By a vote of 161 to 46 the resolution was rejected, and the law became the electoral statute of the country.

On the basis of it, the plebiscite of March 24, 1929, was prepared: The employers' Confederation and the employees' Confederation of Industry each chose 80 candidates, who represented 71,459 and 1,300,000 regularly enrolled members respectively. The agricultural confederations proposed 96 deputies each, although the employers' confederation comprises 314,658 members and the workers' organization 1,021,461 members. The employers and employees in the maritime field each put forward 40 names, while their organizations respectively include 631 and 67,387 enrolled members, and represent, respectively, 1,820 employers and 250,000 workers. These comparisons may suffice to prove that the employers and the employees are not on the same footing numerically, but that only the number of their deputies is equal. The other employers' and workers' confederations presented the following number of candidates: banking, 24 each; commerce, 48 each; inland transportation, 32 each; and professional classes, 160. The number of candidates accorded to agriculture, which is hardly one-fourth of the total, seems small in view of the fact that more than half of the Italian people are engaged in that occupation.

To the list proposed by the syndicates: ". . . the Fascist Grand Council . . . made few additions and even less ex-

clusions. . . All candidates were subject to severe scrutiny, first of all from the point of view of their fascist faith".¹

Mussolini declared that the chamber was to be one hundred per cent fascist: ". . . The chamber, which is to meet for the first time on Saturday, April 20th of the year VII, will be a one hundred per cent fascist chamber, and it will be composed of 400 fascists regularly enrolled in the party. . ."²

Indeed, among the 400 candidates, 55 had joined the fascist organization in 1919, 54 in 1920, 65 in 1921, and 60 in 1922. 59 entered the party in the year following the March on Rome, 36 were among those converted in 1924 and 30 were taken from the fascists who joined the party in 1925. Thus more than three-fourths of the members were fascists of several years standing.

Mussolini further asserted: "that all forces had an opportunity to be represented, including those, which in other times—in a regime of opposing parties—had been regularly ignored."

Nevertheless, he proceeded to explain "that the corporate experiment could not be complete in this election," and he added that "the vote endorses an idea, a regime, and not the men."³

On March 24, 1929, therefore, a single list was submitted to the plebiscite of the people. Those who were opposed to it were given no opportunity for propaganda. The fascist party sent its most eminent members into the larger centers to make election speeches, which had to be "short and intended to illustrate the activity carried out by the regime in various fields."⁴ On the day preceding the plebiscite, the

¹ Speech of Mussolini at the quinquennial assembly of the regime, March 10, 1929.

² Speech of Mussolini in the Chamber of Deputies, December 8, 1928.

³ Speech of Mussolini at the quinquennial assembly of the regime, March 10, 1929.

⁴ Order given out by the secretary of the fascist party, quoted from the *Corriere della Sera*, March 13, 1929.

tenth anniversary of the formation of the war veterans' associations, the *Fasci di Combattimento*, was celebrated. On this occasion, Starace, vice-secretary of the party and extraordinary commissioner of the fascist party in Milan, made a speech at the municipal building of that city, in which, after declaring that all Italians would vote in favor of the list presented, he stated:

If the twelve million votes "yes" should transform themselves into twenty-four million "noes", Mussolini would still remain at Palazzo Venezia [i. e., at the head of the Government] and the revolution of the black shirts would not thereby have suffered any check. . . . It is my habit to clarify the "why" of things. If twenty-four million "noes" were to be deposited in the urns, it would mean that the mass of the electors had been seized by a collective folly. In other words, Italy would have changed into a house of fools. All the more reason, therefore, why the wise should remain at their posts of command . . .¹

Mussolini himself had also declared that the plebiscite could never overthrow the regime, even should the result be unfavorable to fascism:

. . . We are mathematically certain of continuance of power. . . . This plebiscite will take place under absolute tranquillity. We will exercise neither trickery nor pressure. The people will vote perfectly freely. I hardly need to remind you, however, that a revolution may consent to be endorsed by a plebiscite, but never to be overthrown by it. Nevertheless the plebiscite will have its importance, and we wish it to be a solemn occasion. It will have great importance, not only because it comes after six years of the fascist regime, but after ten years of fascism. The Italian people shall judge, and, as I have confidence in the Italian people, in their inborn and profound hon-

¹ Speech of Starace on April 23, 1929, quoted from *Il Popolo d'Italia*, April 24, 1929.

esty, which was only warped by the professional politicians, I think that the plebiscite will prove us not deluded in our more than legitimate expectations . . . ¹

The week preceding the plebiscite was devoted to propaganda. It was made known to those entitled to vote that no absenteeism would be tolerated.

By means of our trusted representatives we will discover the possible guilty absentees and we will punish those who have abstained from their highest civil duty.²

Nobody is to be absent unless he wishes to betray the artisans' organization and hence be subject to unavoidable disciplinary measures, the effects of which will be great, and certainly not agreeable to those affected. . . . ³

declared a circular of an artisans' federation to its members. Similar means were taken to compel the teachers to vote, as a notice sent to those directing teaching institutions and teachers' organizations demonstrates:

. . . It is needless to state that absences from the place of residence on the above mentioned day are not to be tolerated on the part of male teachers who have the civil and disciplinary obligation to vote. . . . Only in case they are called to vote in a place other than the place of employment, may they abandon the latter, taking beforehand the necessary leave of absence, and on their return they must demonstrate . . . showing the electoral certificate, stamped by their own section, that they have in fact fulfilled their duty as citizens. . . . ⁴

¹ Speech of Mussolini at the Chamber of Deputies, December 8, 1928.

² Circular, no. 46 (protocol 2401) of the fascist provincial federation of agriculturalists of Venice, March 15, 1929, signed by the president: Borlototto, quoted from *La Libertà*; March 31, 1929, Paris.

³ Circular of the fascist federation of the artisans community at Treviso, March 20, 1929, no. 5864 signed, Poggi Ulisse; quoted from *La Libertà*, April 7, 1929.

⁴ Circular of the royal school director for the province of Piemonte of March 14, 1929, no. 8941, signed, Umberto Renda; quoted from *La Libertà*, March 31, 1929.

Workers were threatened with dismissal by their employers, if they did not vote. A firm in Turin communicated to its employees as follows: ". . . Those of the Unica personnel who abstain from voting thereby explicitly declare themselves to be unworthy of belonging to our family. . . . The personnel of the Unica must answer hundred per cent to the invitation of the Duce."¹

After those entitled to vote had thus been warned that abstention was to have disagreeable consequences, they were informed that there existed means of knowing how they had voted. To this effect another circular, sent out by the fascist provincial association, gave orders:

All provincial organizers shall inform the voters verbally that, on the basis of a revision of the registers of every ward, we can easily learn who has failed to fulfill his duty as an Italian, as a public official, and as a free adherent of a fascist association. It shall be announced also that this association will, without further delay, proceed to the expulsion of all deserters of the urn, and that the names of the expelled will be communicated to the local branch of the national fascist party, and to the enterprise by which each one of them is employed for eventual further action.²

The vote was not secret, in fact. The ballots "yes" had on the inside the colors of the Italian flag which could be seen through the transparent cover after the ballot was folded, while the "no" ballots were entirely of white paper. Furthermore, the two ballots were signed and stamped by the officials in a different manner, so that it was easy to detect how the person depositing the paper in the urn had voted.

¹ Appeal of the firm "Unica" at Turin to its employees, signed, R. Colombino; quoted from *La Libertà*, March 31, 1929.

² Secret circular of the fascist provincial association of public employment, no. 22, signed, Aldo Luwignoli, Rome, March 20, 1929; quoted from *La Libertà*, April 7, 1929.

It is said that in some districts only "yes" ballots were handed out, and the persons had specifically to ask for the others, if they desired to reject the list of deputies; in other places, where the members of the syndicates had been called together and proceeded in a body to the polling place, the secretary of that organization voted in their name. It is also claimed that sometimes the workers were requested to return the unused ballots to their association, but this was rendered partly ineffective because some, recognizing that it was possible to tell from the outside of the paper how they had voted, used "yes" sheets in voting, but crossed the "yes" out or pasted stamps with images of anti-fascists over it.

In spite of the fact that the vote was not secret and that those who had deposited an unfavorable vote ran the risk of physical ill-treatment by the fascist militia, some had the courage to vote against the Government list, and others abstained from presenting themselves at the urn. It is asserted that especially in the South of Italy the percentage of voters at the plebiscite was very low, about thirty per cent in Naples, and still less in other places.

The official Government figures on the plebiscite are as follows:

Enrolled persons	9,650,570	
Persons who voted	8,650,740	
"Yes"	8,506,576	
"No"	136,198	
Percentage of persons who voted ..		89.63%

The syndicates played only a minor role in the plebiscite. The bulk of propaganda had been carried on by the party itself and by the clergy as a result of the Lateran Treaty.

The new parliament which will be in power up to March 1934, thus far has no rules of procedure. The regulations are now (June, 1929) being drafted, and it is being discussed

whether the secret vote shall be retained. It may also be decided that no motion can be presented without the previous consent of the head of the Government, as was provided by the law of December 24, 1925, for the past legislative assembly. In any case, "the Fascist Grand Council has decided that a deputy suspended from all political activity [by his party] loses the right to frequent the hall [i. e. the Chamber of Deputies] and that a fascist deputy expelled [from his party] automatically loses his mandate".

It cannot, of course, be asserted that the electoral law will not be changed. On the contrary, the present phase is a political one, as the Fascist Grand Council reaffirmed when meeting after the plebiscite, but there still exists a tendency towards economic representation, as is shown by the resolution of the Grand Council, accompanying the draft of the law, which said: "This does not exclude the possibility, however, that, step by step, as the corporations became consolidated, it may be found advisable to arrive, after experience with the next legislature, at an exclusive form of national corporate fascist representation."

Quite apart from the way in which Parliament is elected and composed, there exists a notable difference between this chamber and the legislative assemblies in other countries. "... The official establishment of the Grand Council will have a notable influence on the constitutional position of Parliament"¹ for, while in other countries the lower house is the sole body which can propose and adopt any law, the Fascist Grand Council for a long time has had the habit of drafting the most important laws, which Parliament, with or without discussion, has always proceeded to endorse. Furthermore, according to the recent law, whenever constitutional laws are concerned, no proposal for modification can be made by any deputy without having previously heard the opinion of the Fascist Grand Council.

¹ Carlo Costamagna, *Lo Stato Corporativo, quale Stato di Diritto*, p. 42.

The Fascist Grand Council is a "supreme organism, in which all institutions of the regime and all organized forces of the country meet, enter into contact, and where a synthesis is created which, at the same time, disciplines and coordinates these forces."¹ The Fascists believe that

this task could not be accomplished by an elected chamber . . . [which is] too numerous on the one hand, and too incomplete on the other, because some fundamental forces of the regime, for instance the Senate, are not represented in it or do not find themselves in a position corresponding to the task which they fulfill in the complex system. The legislative chamber could not be adapted to constitute the organ of synthesis and coordination for which the need has been felt from the very beginning.²

The Fascist Grand Council includes three sorts of members: There are those who are nominated for an unlimited period of time, such as the *quadrumviri*, who led the March on Rome, the secretaries of the fascist party since 1922, and those who, as members of the Government, have been in the Grand Council for at least three years. The second group includes the highest officials of the fascist state: the president of the Senate and the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, the ministers, the undersecretary of the head of the Government, the commander general of the militia, the members of the directorate of the fascist party, the president of the Academy of Italy, and the president of the Institute of Fascist Culture, the president of the *Balilla* organization (the fascist boy-scouts), the president of the special tribunal for defense of the state, the presidents of the national confederations of fascist syndicates, and the president of the cooperative organizations. These members form part of the Fascist Grand

¹ Alfredo Rosso, ministerial report at the Senate, when introducing the law.

² *Ibid.*

Council as long as they hold their official positions. They are nominated by royal decree on proposal of the head of the Government, and may at any time be recalled. The same holds true for the first category. In addition, the head of the Government may, by a decree of his own, call any number of persons who have distinguished themselves in the service of the country, to form part of the Fascist Grand Council for a period of three years, whereafter, if Mussolini so decides, he may reappoint them. He is free at any moment to recall them.

The members of the Grand Council have the same standing as the senators and deputies. Except in cases of flagrant crime, they are immune from arrest or judicial procedure or police measures, without authorization of the Fascist Grand Council itself. Against no member of the Fascist Grand Council, who also belongs to the fascist party, can disciplinary measures be undertaken, unless so decided by the Grand Council itself. These provisions ensure unlimited freedom to the members of this supreme organ of the Government. They are not responsible to the people nor to the parliamentary representatives, but only to the Grand Council itself, and no means exist to control their discussions and decisions, for the sittings are secret.

In November, 1928, the Fascist Grand Council was made by law a constitutional organ of the fascist state, in which it occupies an eminent position. However,

. . . it would be erroneous to think of the Government as being dependent upon the Grand Council. The Government does not depend any more upon the Grand Council than it depends on Parliament. The presidency of the Grand Council which is entrusted to the head of the Government, the convocation and the fixation of the daily procedure of the Grand Council, which powers are also reserved for the head of the Government, demonstrate among other things this independence. The Grand

Council is not above the Government, it stands next to the Government in order to collaborate with it. . . . The Council of Ministers . . . has the last word in all political questions, even if the Grand Council has previously expressed its opinion on them.¹

However, it must be mentioned that Mussolini, whenever he proposes a law or regulation, first submits the draft to the Grand Council, and only after the latter's decision is it brought before the Council of Ministers. It is very unlikely that this body would refuse any provision endorsed by the Grand Council, as all ministers are active members of it and while there have had an opportunity of expressing their points of view.

Important functions are entrusted to the Grand Council. Its opinion must be heard on the succession to the throne and on any modification in the powers and prerogatives of the Crown. It must also be consulted on the declaration of war and the conclusion of peace, and on any future alterations in the composition and the functioning of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Questions relating to the prerogative of the executive power to issue legal standards pertaining to syndicate or corporate organizations, to the relations between the State and the Holy See, and to international treaties which involve changes in Italian territory, fall also within its jurisdiction. All of these questions were formerly decided independently by the King or were submitted to Parliament. Whenever the case requires that the decision of the Grand Council should be endorsed by the houses in order to be valid, the project is presented to them.

The fascists assert that the Grand Council neither forces the King to any particular action, nor deliberates for the people without their approval, for the position of the Grand

¹ Rocco, ministerial report in the Senate, when presenting the project of the law.

Council is purely one of consultation. It must, however, be considered that, while in the present Senate the drafts of the Grand Council may encounter a certain amount of opposition, the Chamber will usually pass them without modification, since, as will be remembered, the deputies are all persons who have been chosen, or at least endorsed, by the Grand Council itself, and will therefore be very unlikely to unite against it.

The Fascist Grand Council must be consulted on the succession to the throne, and it has also the right to propose a successor to the Prime Minister. On proposal of Mussolini, the Grand Council draws up a list of persons whom it regards as fitted to succeed him as head of the Government, which list is submitted to the Crown in case of a change in the head of the Government. Similar lists are drawn up for the different ministries. It is declared that the King is not obliged to choose from the list, that it is a mere proposal, which has been prepared in advance to avoid any panic or crisis which otherwise might result from the sudden disappearance of the head of the Government.

If the Fascist Grand Council is the supreme organ of the nation, it is also at the head of the fascist party. Modifications in statutes and regulations can be undertaken only by it. It determines the political activities of the party and it nominates and recalls the secretary and all other higher officials of the party.

The Fascist Grand Council has also the right to be consulted on any questions pertaining to the prerogatives of the head of the Government. It may seem that Mussolini has thereby surrendered a part of his power, but it must be remembered that he can, at any time, assure himself a majority by appointing additional members to the Grand Council, that he can propose the recall of any member he deems undesirable, and that he is the president of the Grand Council, with

whom the exclusive right rests of determining daily procedure. It is therefore correct to maintain that the Grand Council, with respect to the Government—which is concentrated in the person of Mussolini—has only a consultative position, and that the right of decision rests with the head of the Government.

It has been pointed out by Senator Albertini that in a country in which the power is concentrated in the hands of a single person, any parliamentary assembly is only of relative value, whatever the method of its composition may be. The function of the present Chamber of Deputies is not to decide on the fate of the country, nor to control the Government, for the head of the Government is not responsible to it. Mussolini has declared that the present Parliament "may freely discuss the work of the Government—it is to be well understood—not in order to overthrow it, but to criticize and to collaborate."¹

The same function, however, seems to be attributed to the Fascist Grand Council, and as this is not only the superior organization, but is declared to be a more integral and more complete expression of the nation, it may indeed be asked why Parliament is not eliminated altogether, as its legislative functions and its power of control have been greatly restricted. It is true that the conception of the corporate state calls for an economic chamber, and that the fascists declare that they are working towards such a system, but at present the Parliament is political, even according to the fascists, and furthermore the idea of the corporate state as it is advanced by the fascists, does not take account of the existence and the predominating position of the Grand Council.

The Grand Council assumes the functions of Parliament in that it drafts the important laws, to the acceptance of which no opposition is made in a chamber which is a creation

¹ Speech of Mussolini in the Chamber of Deputies, December 8, 1928.

of the Grand Council itself and where any undesirable deputy can be eliminated by expulsion from the fascist party, over which the Grand Council also rules. Moreover, the highest representatives of the syndicates are by right members in the supreme body, where they may defend the interests of the producing groups. Nor would the situation be changed if Parliament included other groups besides the syndicates, for it would simply become a duplication of the Grand Council, distinguished from it only by the greater number of its members. This would have the result of rendering its decisions less rapid, and although it is undoubtedly true that representation on a narrower basis would permit a closer contact between the delegates and the people, this would only present a slight advantage, not outweighing the inconveniences resulting from the coexistence of two fundamentally similar bodies.

The Italian Parliament, like any other one created under a similar system, whether economic or not, has no essential functions, so that no inconvenience would result from its elimination. It is probable that it has not been suppressed up to now because this would have made an unfavorable impression abroad.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

By its exaltation of the nation and its absolute form of government, fascism has become a typical example of a tendency which has received a strong stimulus from the disorder of the post-war years. Many ideas which the fascists have applied were, however, proposed in Italy earlier by other parties, but it is perhaps not quite an appropriate criticism to say that the latter would also have put them into practice. This may well be so, but it does not diminish the merit of the fascist Government in having actually applied them. It may be admitted for the sake of discussion that others would have done better, but this will always remain a matter of opinion and speculation. If there were other forces and valuable ideas making for the regeneration and pacification of Italy before 1922, and at the time of the March on Rome—and there certainly were, although they were perhaps not as well organized as the fascists and less in favor of direct action—it may be questioned whether the accession of fascism to power was really necessary to save Italy from an inner chaos, or if conditions would not have adjusted themselves in any case. And should it be admitted that the energetic methods of fascism have at least accelerated a systematization, it may be questioned whether, after the completion of this task, it was still necessary and advantageous to the country for the fascists to remain in power.

But it is undoubtedly true that in the beginning fascism presented in the eyes of the ordinary Italian an element of order and discipline, and as that seemed most desirable, large

masses of the population supported the new Government and had great expectations as to what it might achieve. Among the promises that fascism made was the elimination of warfare between social classes and the development of a national labor policy. To accomplish this aim, it proposed a complete reorganization of socio-political life and created a new system that is in itself coherent and in which even the most extreme consequences are a logical result of the fundamental presumptions.

Out of the fundamental convictions that labor is a social duty and that the state, the tangible expression of the nation, is an ethical unit which transcends the span of life of any one generation, incorporating the efforts of all past Italians, flow all the ideas that fascist syndicalism advocates. Always greater and stronger shall Italy become, every generation must render it more powerful; on the basis of the labors and achievements of the people living today, those of tomorrow shall build. Individuals and generations perish and pass, but the state has a perpetual life. Hence its right to control activities of the citizens, who shall enjoy every liberty except the one to damage general interests. No definite statements are made as to the method of arriving at this aim, for in its methods fascism has not bound itself to any predetermined program. It has tendencies, but it regulates its actions and decisions according to conditions at the moment, going out of its way to the one side or to the other as a result of varying pressures. Continuity for it is not important: before every decision it reexamines the situation.

Still, there is one fundamental principle: everyone, above all, has the supreme duty of working for the greatness of his country, even if this cost him personal sacrifices; just as in moments of territorial danger men rush to the border to oppose a living wall to the invaders, to prevent them from violating the integrity and autonomy of their country, so in

peace times, in work-a-day life, every citizen is a soldier in his country. He fights for its greatness with other arms, but he must do his share in raising the prestige and power of his nation, be it moral, intellectual or material.

Just as it is a widely accepted standpoint that the state may compel every man in the country to give his life when a war breaks out, so the fascists think that the state may constrain its subjects to work for the nation's greatness in times of peace. Above all stand the duties of the individuals. Any activity in which they may engage, and which could damage the prestige of the country, must be forbidden, and, if necessary, suppressed. Hence the duty of subjecting personal or class considerations to the higher interests of production; hence the outlawry of strikes and lockouts, and the compulsory arbitration of the labor courts. The state must be given means to carry out its supreme task of safeguarding the mission of an everliving Italy, of defending the nation against the damages which one class or the other may inflict upon it by disturbing the inner equilibrium, necessary for its exterior strength. Therefore it is entitled to control individual life and the activities of associations even in its minor details. It will not always do so, but it has always the right, and must maintain the means to do it. To what extent it will make use of these privileges, will be determined by the conditions existing at a given moment.

In any case, individuals, groups and classes hold all liberties by grant of the state, and not because they represent a fundamental human right. When individuals, groups and classes comply with their duties, they are entitled to the protection of the state; when they stand against that state, they cannot claim anything from it, not even the execution of justice. Their attitude renders them persons who hinder, or at least retard, the national development, and as such they must be eliminated. Only out of the duties of the citizens, groups

and classes flow their rights. The state will assist those who fulfill the requirements. It will ensure justice among individuals and social groups; it will try to ameliorate their economic position; it will allow them any activity that is not opposed to the general welfare; it will above all educate them to a more mature citizenship in the fascist sense of the term, but at the beginning it must teach them.

At present the political form of life most corresponding to modern conditions is declared to be found in the syndicate state. All producers of the nation, whatever their occupation may be, are grouped into economic associations, so-called syndicates, which form the cells of the new state. They take care of the technical education and the welfare of all whom they represent, and they speak for them in their labor relations and before the state. Pure political life is to be completely eliminated, as there is no need for a political struggle, and parliament is to become an economic body. The capitalist class is accepted as a reality, and there is no attempt to exterminate it, but, like all other classes of society, it is to be disciplined by the state.

In its acceptance of capitalism and its advocacy of a state superior to individuals and classes, fascism breaks with the syndicalism of Sorel. It is further distinguished from it by the stress it lays on hierarchic organization. The state, represented by a few or by one person, cannot follow the actions of all individuals and of the smaller groups. Control is only possible when the person who presides over a certain territory, or a certain association, is responsible to his superior for all actions of the group as a whole, and of any of its members in particular. In turn every member is responsible to him for his actions. The superior answers for the various persons who are under his supervision to the competent authority, who again answers for those who stand under his control, and so forth, until the many threads run together in

one point, and all power and control concentrates in one person. This hierarchic principle, which makes any person responsible, not to those below, but to those above him in the scale, is not possible in a democratic regime, where elections establish the representatives in their positions. The one who is responsible for his subordinates must have the right of appointing them, or at least of approving them.

In practice, either it has not been possible to apply the fascist conception unconditionally, or the fascists have preferred not to do so because the country was not prepared to accept it. Fascism calls itself a revolution, because it attempts to overthrow the liberal-democratic state, but it believes that this must not be done in a sudden manner: it calls its methods evolutionistic and advocates that law must be preceded by action. Hence at present old and new forms live side by side; the old still survive, the new have not quite entrenched themselves. Fascist syndicalism, having come into existence in 1921, has had importance only since the arrival of fascism in power in October, 1922, and even then it was not immediately able to wrest leadership from the socialist labor organizations. The law of April 3, 1926, however, entrusted the fascist organizations with the exclusive privilege of representing the workers in all negotiations and since the beginning of 1927, the socialist labor organizations have been completely eliminated and the Catholics have been seriously handicapped in their contacts with the masses. This was a great victory for fascism, but it also brought a grave responsibility, for the people had been promised social peace and prosperity and now that the way seemed open for it, they expected to see it accomplished.

At present fascist syndicalism is in full swing. The syndicates represent all producers in the country, although actual membership is reserved to those who give proof of good moral and political standing. By this provision those work-

ers who are radically opposed to fascism are excluded from the syndicates. Employers are organized on the one side, and the workers, including the intellectuals, on the other. The state disciplines and controls the relations between the various social groups, besides controlling the special activities of each. It further proposes the creation of corporations in which all those interested in a given trade or industry, whether employers, technicians or workers, are to be united on an equal footing, but in view of the difficulties that have stood and still stand in the way of the creation of the syndicate state, it is not yet possible to proceed to the corporate phase. The difficulties come from within the system as well as from the outside. Measures like the giving of preference in employment to the fascists and to the members of the fascist syndicates are criticised and opposed even by members of the fascist party. Still there is little probability of any change, as this is an idea that the leaders of fascism have repeatedly endorsed. Difficulties resulting from the appointment of inefficient syndicate officials and from excessive contributions have their origin within the system. Such is also the case with the disrespect for collective contracts, which is especially resented by the workers, because the economic situation in Italy, which is already unfavorable, is thereby still more depressed.

These conditions are also responsible in part for the fact that strikes still occur, in spite of the severe punishments for such action. However, some cases have been brought before the Labor Court, though so far it has decided upon only two important ones. Assistance to the workers has also been undertaken in the field of social welfare and education. Laws on social insurance have been passed, public works, which present an attempt to mitigate unemployment have been undertaken, model houses for workers have been constructed and the *Dopolavoro*, which offers physical and in-

tellectual recreational possibilities to the workers has been created. Of late also the representation of the nation by economic groups has been attempted, but even the fascists declare that the new legislative body does not correspond to what they have advocated as an economic parliament.

Although the experiment of integral syndicalism has not yet reached its final phase, fascism can be said to be in active operation. Like every other socio-economic conception it bears some relation to actual life, but in some respects it falls short of it. Criticisms made by opponents, if they originate within the general frame, are usually admitted by the sincere and clear-sighted adherents. The difference between them lies in the relative importance that the two groups attribute to the weaknesses and the advantages of the system. On the basis of the same facts, the one rejects fascism, because it does not believe that the good it has brought to Italy can make up for the damage it has done to the people, while the other regards its advantages as far greater than its faults.

It is said in favor of fascism that by incessant exaltation of the national idea it has given a new national consciousness to entire strata of the population. For those persons who were brought by their work into contact with the century-old Italian culture, who intimately felt the Italian characteristics, for those who in daily contact with the living forces of the country had acquired a feeling of what Italy meant, this stimulus was unnecessary. But those who lived indifferent and isolated and who did not feel themselves vital elements of the nation, have been awakened, so that a wide spiritual revival of Italy has occurred.

At the same time fascism, with a strong hand, has disciplined the Italians, who by nature present a more turbulent element than the northern races; it has assured order, although perhaps only exteriorly and temporarily; it has imposed absolute obedience. It may have gone too far, even

much too far, but it has the merit of having reacted against an element of weakness and dissension, and the effects of this will persist, even when the controlling force has disappeared. It is undoubtedly due partly to this discipline that the Italian laborer works diligently today, while in the immediate post-war years there was much "soldiering" in the factories. The continuous advocacy on the part of the fascists of class collaboration in the beginning also had an influence in bringing about this change. Even apart from this result, the exaltation of coöperation between social classes has been beneficial. It does not matter if fascism succeeds in establishing it, or if under conditions of economic freedom class struggle returns; what is important is that a doubt has been raised as to the absolute necessity of the class struggle, conceived in a violent manner and as an absolute dogma, and that it is recognized—as indeed it has always been by the less radical of the socialist leaders—that under the influence of the overcharged, excited post-war atmosphere the value of such struggle had been exaggerated. The reexamination of the problem was therefore valuable, for it can only be profitable if the people realize that under appropriate conditions collaboration and tranquility also have their advantages and present a better basis for the coexistence of different economic groups.

For the fascists the advocacy of coöperation was a necessity, if they wanted to unite the capitalists and the workers in one party. They recognized that any social order must take account of the large masses of the people, but they also saw a social force in the capitalists, and in this they have shown much practical sense. Still, it cannot definitely be said that they have surrendered to the capitalists, although the fascist Government has favored that class. But whenever the Government was strong, Mussolini has imposed his will on the capitalists, as in the case of the "tax in workers"

or of compulsory land reclamation. When there were difficulties which threatened the regime, however, he has yielded to their wishes, so as to retain their support. At present this latter tendency prevails, as is indicated by the decision against workers' councils or by the exclusion of the workers from what might well be termed a corporation of commerce.

Notwithstanding the fact that fascism has tried to organize the country on an occupational basis, it has recognized that other, higher values often have an important part in shaping national life. Thus the people, animated by a boundless faith, may undergo and endure sacrifices which would seem absolutely impossible on the basis of a mere examination of the figures. Fascism has recognized and availed itself of this, demanding absolute faith from its followers, and this explains why there are persons believing in fascism as in a religion. To the complete devotion of these elements fascism owes many of its successes.

In social welfare legislation and popular education, fascism has done much, although it is perhaps not sufficient to meet the needs. Most important is the creation of the *Dopolavoro*, which is a popular organization even with non-fascists. Among other activities, it promulgates more hygiene, sports and outdoor life, and the Government supports these movements, realizing that the health of the people has only to gain thereby. Wherever Italy lagged behind other nations in modern improvements of living conditions, fascism has gone to work. In this sense fascism is decidedly a modern movement.

However, if fascism has its advantages, the difficulties, the dark side of the picture, are not lacking. In a hierarchic organization, personal dislikes and jealousies have too great an influence and cause injustices too easily. In face of these faults, the various possibilities of appeal provided for are of little or no value, for not only may everything depend

upon the interpretation of such terms as "moral character", "national faith" or "technical competence", but many persons will abstain from such action, regarding it as a useless waste of time and energy.

In every bureaucratic organization these faults are inherent, but fascism has carried them into the field of labor, by transforming the workers' syndicates from positions of vital importance, where social ideas fermented, into bureaucratic offices, similar to any other administrative office of the prefecture or the municipality. Hence, labor organizations have just as much or little real contact with the people as any other governmental office, and it is quite understandable that the syndicate system is a theoretical structure, built in large part on the passivity of the masses. The workers are part of it only in so far as they are compelled to pay their contributions to the associations and to respect the standards decided upon in collective contracts, but they resent this compulsion, which imposes duties upon them without according corresponding rights, since not all of them may participate in the activities of the syndicates, nor even in the determination of their labor conditions. The representatives who conclude the labor contracts are either selected exclusively by those who enjoy the privilege of membership, or are appointed from above.

The workers no longer accept this method, which may have been possible in former times. Today the consciousness of the proletarians has been awakened, and they demand a part in the determination and the shaping of the policies which affect them. A government may be perfectly sincere in its attempt to ameliorate the situation of the working classes; still the workers will oppose such paternalistic action because it offends their dignity. It is true that when the people are given the opportunity to determine their own fate, they frequently do not make use of that power, but delegate

it to others; yet they have the certainty that they can at any time intervene. Often the leaders have pretended to act according to the desires of the people, while they have only listened to their arguments and then acted according to personal convictions or for their own advantage, but the people have at least had the illusion that they were consulted.

The same has been true when agitators, abusing the lack of intellectual training of the audience, have led their hearers to vote for decisions which are really against their interests, but it is by such mistakes that the masses acquire their political education. From this point of view, even the disadvantages of fascism may after all turn out to be useful to Italy, for they awaken the people and teach them to esteem those rights which they enjoyed before, but which they did not quite appreciate. What they painfully feel the absence of today, they will appreciate tomorrow, and in the future they will defend those privileges and take an active interest, ceasing thereby to be passive elements in the national life. Still, it would probably have been better to guide the people to a more conscious and responsible exercise of their civil duties without taking the right of self-determination from them.

The clear-sighted fascists and their leaders quite recognize this, but it is a risk to grant greater liberty to the people after they have once been suppressed, for much hatred is breeding under the surface; and it may then find an expression. Hence the situation will probably remain unchanged, and this embitters the workers, all the more so because through discrimination in admission, membership in an association is granted often only on a political basis. Only fascists, or those who pretend to be so, are admitted; nor is the situation agreeable for those who remain unwaveringly attached to their former convictions, and who have entered the syndicates out of economic considerations, for they are compelled to participate in fascist demonstrations. This shows that in spite of the

fact that the fascists advocate the corporate state, and the elimination of political struggle, they are continually influenced by political considerations. Not only are the leaders of fascism conscious of the fact that political fascism dominates every phase of national life, but of late they have even declared themselves in favor of such action, and have thereby, at least potentially, overthrown their own program.

The fact that state control is often exercised from a party point of view—for the Government, if it is neither under the control of the capitalists nor committed to the workers, is in the hands of a party—is all the more objectionable, since some members abuse their power for personal purposes. In view of these imperfections the exclusion of all opposition elements and the elimination of criticism, has its distinct disadvantages, especially because fascism is a young movement still in the period of formation, during which criticism is valuable, although it may be irritating, for it discloses the weaknesses of the system and thus contributes to its amelioration. Nor is it more than a superficial advantage for the fascists if they succeed in including all producers in their associations, and if the party every day finds new adherents, for not only do the people remain fundamentally passive, if not adverse, but the leaders cannot safely rely on the sincere support of the enrolled members in moments of danger.

Too many have been induced to declare themselves converted to fascism by the advantages which result from such a declaration, so that the system favors human weaknesses and encourages insincerity and hypocrisy, which, if they become general characteristics, are disgraceful, retarding and degrading to a nation. Perhaps fascism, while recognizing these disadvantages, bases its hope on another psychological factor. It often happens that people, by continually conforming, voluntarily or otherwise, to an exterior necessity, although they secretly disapprove of their action, will as a re-

sult of a process of self-justification and self-suggestion change their attitude and end by adapting themselves in their convictions and conceptions. Under such circumstances the numerical gain in fascist adherents would signify a real increase in the power of the party. It is probable that the number of persons who will so adapt their personal beliefs will be considerable if the Government succeeds in overcoming the difficulties which trouble it, and if it is able to perfect its syndicate organization of the country.

But the fascists, under the leadership of the party, tend rather towards an ever more rigid and intolerant interpretation of the laws. This attitude is in part due to certain low elements in the fascist party, as is the case with every revolutionary movement. By their very nature these forces are the most violent and obstinate ones, and it is difficult for the more conservative currents to gain the lead. It is recognized that this would be to the advantage of the country, but at the present time the inner conflict is not yet decided. Much will depend upon the leader, who may favor the one side or the other according to what he believes more convenient and more apt to strengthen fascism and to perpetuate it in power.

There are, however, ideas inherent in the very conception of the fascist syndicate system which lead to practical difficulties. Thus the confinement of the labor movement within national limits may be impossible, although it might be profitable for the nation as a whole. The emancipation of the proletarians has been declared possible only on an international basis, and even if this should be incorrect, the fact that the labor movement from its very beginning has been international has confirmed this conviction among the workers. A new direction can be given to the labor movement only if all countries strive to give it a national basis; otherwise the isolation of the workers of one country will hardly be permanently realizable. Nor can such technical international

collaboration as Italy participates in, in the International Labor Office in Geneva, replace the international workmen's organizations. As long as the proletarians in all countries are in a position of inferiority, international solidarity will be kept alive.

On the other hand it may be questioned whether the syndicate organization of a nation is possible without the control of an independent power, the state, since otherwise the syndicates would in all probability outgrow the state. Whether this is desirable and an orderly national life will nevertheless be possible, or whether anarchy must necessarily result, is a problem which in the past few years has been intensively debated. It is the problem of revolutionary syndicalism, which to examine here, would transcend the scope of this study. The fascists do not believe in this possibility and have therefore conceived a different system, which in itself—it must be repeated—is logical and consistent and of which the totalitarian and absolute ideas form an intimate part.

Other theories have also included the conviction that the exclusion and even destruction of all opposing elements may be necessary under certain conditions, and hence justified, or at least excused, if a new conception of value is offered in exchange, which through the greater happiness and social justice it brings to the people amply pays for what it has demolished.

The fascists declare that it is their aim to increase and improve production, so that Italy's competitive powers will be strengthened, and so that she will gain a more favorable position in the world market. On the basis of this improved economic status, it will be possible, they think, to build a great and strong nation, exuberant in vital forces, which will result in an Italy of imperial power and splendor. The test of the syndicate system and of the entire fascist movement, will therefore consist in their success or failure to realize these

aspirations. At present the economic situation is decidedly depressed and there seem to be no indications of improvement, which would warrant the conclusion that the fascists are not likely to realize their aims. Besides, it may well be doubted whether fascism can achieve its ambitions by the methods it pursues. It has been mentioned that the fascists have not succeeded in attaching the intellectuals to their regime, and it has even been contended that the methods they employ in attempting to organize that class in themselves lead to the degradation of art and science in Italy. Similarly, the rigid control exercised over the workers is resented by the best among them, who naturally try to escape what they regard as a humiliating situation and their emigration is said to result in the decline of good manual labor in Italy. For the observer of fascist syndicalism, these outcomes are most important, for they directly defeat the aims for which the fascists declare they strive, and should the end not be reached, there is no justification for their totalitarian, intolerant attitude towards adherents of other political beliefs.

But even a possible failure of fascism would not prove that the entire syndicalist conception is worthless. Rigid and intolerant laws are not necessarily a means of absolute domination. Any regulation is good or bad in relation to the manner in which it is applied and if the fascist laws were to remain unchanged and serve only to entitle the Government to act in moments of real national emergency, if they were to serve only to draw an extreme limit, while personal interpretation and action tended to take the harshness out of the provisions, the syndicate system would acquire another aspect.

On the other hand the idea of hierarchy could well be dissociated from the syndicate conception and instead free elections of the representatives of the various groups could take place. For the fascists it was indeed necessary to rely on appointment from above, in order to eliminate the socialist

organizers who had still a strong hold on the people, but logically the two ideas of hierarchy and of syndicalism have no connection. Therefore it has indeed been frequently advocated, that the entire population be organized into economic groups, and that these syndicates, in uncontrolled elections, appoint their representatives to an economic parliament. However, in view of the fact that individuals are not only producers but also citizens, it might be well to counterbalance the economic chamber by a second, political body, elected by universal suffrage.

The fact that the responsible persons in the Government hold their position and power by delegation from the people does not exclude the possibility of a certain state control. Indeed, the state should watch over the general interests of the public. The idea of corporations, whether state organs or not, appears also to be excellent as a means of promoting better relations, understanding and collaboration between social classes. Besides, to unite the various economic groups of a given field of production for discussion of special problems concerning them, would probably have the effect of bringing about greater efficiency. Of course, all agreements would have to be entered into by the free will of those concerned.

Modifications would be possible within the frame of the syndicate system, that might permit a better functioning of it, and experimentation is in process all the time; but it seems improbable that any fundamental changes will take place under the fascist regime, as they would be contrary to its totalitarian spirit. However, it is generally felt in Italy that the present phase of fascism is not definite; it is undecided whether fascism will throw the syndicate system overboard and attempt an entirely new solution of the socio-economic problem, and if so, what the policy it adopts will be, or whether it will concentrate its efforts on the perfection of the

syndicate organization and attempt to realize the corporate state.

In the latter case, the success or failure of the integral syndicate, or corporate system will in large measure depend upon the political policy of fascism, for the average worker does not oppose the idea on any theoretical grounds, but he distrusts it because it is fascist, and he dislikes the political aspects of fascism. Until recently many of those who criticized the Government nevertheless had faith in its leader, Mussolini, and they believed that he was isolated and unaware of the difficulties that the people encountered as a result of fascist measures. The removal by Mussolini of various persons on whom public criticism had focused, seemed to justify that contention, but of late the impression has begun to spread among the people that Mussolini himself has known about the abuses of power, injustices and bribes, which have occurred in his party and that he sometimes has been personally responsible for certain measures which are opposed by the people. Naturally, if the people as a result of this impression felt disillusioned, this would make their resentment all the more bitter.

However, even a generalization of that feeling would not necessarily mean an immediate overthrow of the fascist Government, for it may well keep in power for an undeterminable time by mere force. The future that will begin for Italy after the passing of the present Government depends in great part on how the fall of fascism comes about. If it occurs in a sudden violent manner, it is probable that the syndicate structure will be completely eliminated, for in the eyes of the people it is intimately interwoven with fascism. What will remain, however, will be a certain state of mind disposed for the discussion of the problem of syndicalism. Many persons who formerly intolerantly refused to consider any possibility of an organization of society on a syndicate basis, or of an occupational representation of the people, have been compelled

by the existence of the fascist regime to examine the proposal critically, and have formed an opinion on the value of the syndicate doctrine itself. Although perhaps opposing the way in which the fascists have enforced their ideas, they may have come to the conviction that the conception includes many good points, and a Government resting on an entirely different political basis may be disposed to carry it into practice. This might occur in case fascism were overcome gradually, so that labor leaders of a different political faith might gain influence over the workers' syndicates, while fascism is nominally still in power. They then might possibly not overthrow the system after a change in Government, but, after effecting some modifications, try to permeate the structure with a different spirit.

Quite as important for the success of the syndicate system as the political policy, is the solution of the economic problem. As long as the workers and employers struggle with difficulties, they will tend to criticize and oppose any syndicate organization, and they will be disposed to regard it as responsible for their economic distress. But even the solution of the economic problem would not necessarily mean final success for fascism, or its syndicate experiment. A syndicate state, such as the fascists propose, should be the result of an organic growth. If it is imposed from without the people take no interest in it. It may be kept in existence for a certain period of time by coercion, but coercion is usually resented by those to whom it is applied, so that the number of persons who change from passive onlookers to active opponents tends to increase as a more complete application of the system necessitates a wider use of force. The element of time, therefore, which is so powerful an ally for those who are trying to advance the natural development of a system, works against those attempting to impose social structures by force.

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